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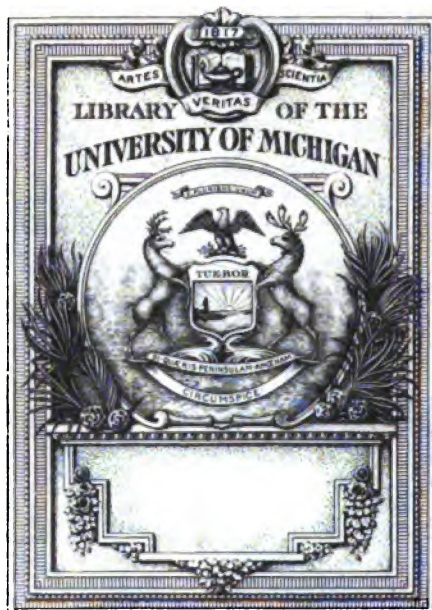
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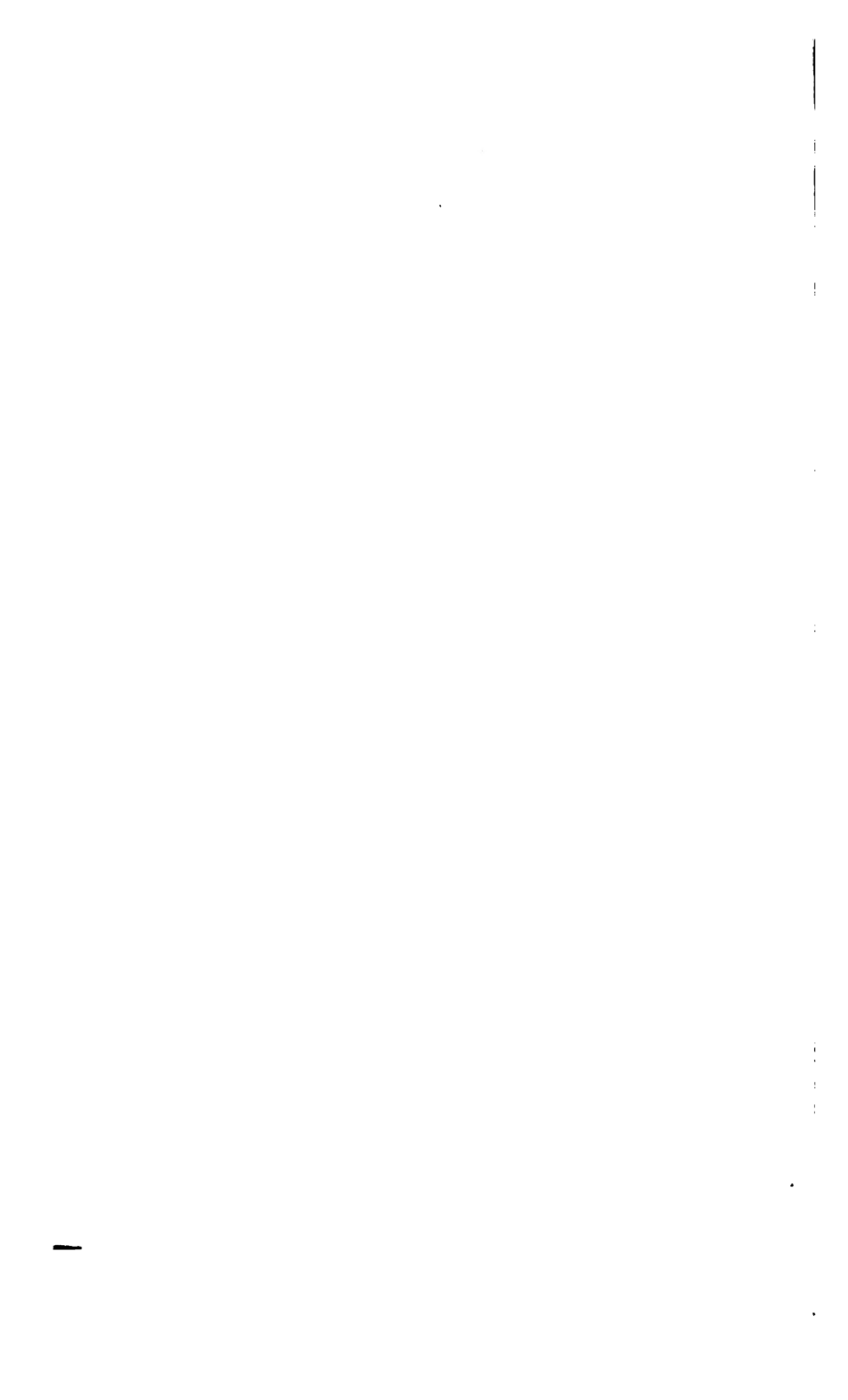
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NOTES

ON ALL THE
BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE,
FOR THE USE OF THE
PULPIT AND PRIVATE FAMILIES,
IN FOUR VOLUMES.
VOL. IV.

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S. &c.

*SI juxta apostolum Paulum Christus Dei virtus est;
Deique sapientia, et qui nescit scripturas nescit Dei
virtutem ejusque sapientiam, ignoratio scripturarum ig-
noratio Christi est.*

————— **JEROME IN ESAIAM;**

—————
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NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER I.

HAVING gone over the historical books of the New Testament, I proceed to the consideration of the *Epistles*, which are a very useful part of the Canon of Scripture, tho' certainly of much less consequence than the others. The certain knowledge that Jesus Christ was commissioned by God to preach the great doctrine of a resurrection to a future life, that he confirmed this doctrine by the best attested miracles, and that, in the farther confirmation and exemplification of it, he himself submitted to die, and actually rose from the dead, which we learn from the four gospels, is all that is essential to christianity ; as the knowledge of this is all that is of much importance as a motive to a good life. However, we are much confirmed in our belief of the history of Christ by the farther account of the first promulgation of the gospel by the Apostles, and the miracles which they wrought in confirmation
of

of it, which we have in the acts of the Apostles, which therefore is of the next importance to us as christians. These books having all the marks of authenticity that any books whatever have, and much stronger of the same kind ; having been all published while the transactions they record were all recent, having never been contradicted by friends or enemies, having been often quoted and referred to by friends and enemies, from the earliest times, and also having been copied and translated into various languages in a very early period, they have all the authority that histories can have.

But besides this direct testimony, there is an additional evidence of a more indirect and subtle kind, but if duly considered highly satisfactory, which these epistles are calculated to give us. Being as unquestionably genuine as the historical books, we are enabled by them to perceive how the chief actors in those transactions thought and felt in their peculiar circumstances ; and we can compare those feelings with the feelings of human nature as we now observe it ; and therefore, by considering them in connection with the historical facts, we are the better judges of the probability of the whole story.

Thus if we could entertain any doubts of the truth of the Roman history in the time of Cicero, the publication of his own letters, and those of his friends, corresponding with the history of their times, as found in other writers, would be an abundant confirmation of it. Evidence of this kind, therefore, from the letters and private papers of persons principally concerned in any transaction, is always sought after, and collected with
care

care by those who are curious in history. Besides, it is more easy to distinguish genuine letters than genuine history, as they generally contain allusions to more particular circumstances, with respect to persons, times, and places, of which the apostolical epistles, especially those of Paul, are full; so that no person can read them, and have any doubt of their being really *his*, or written in the circumstances in which he represents himself. Also, the most important of them being written to whole churches, they were carefully preserved, till so many copies were taken, that their authenticity was placed beyond all doubt.

No unbeliever, I am confident, has read these letters with due attention; as becomes historians and philosophers. If any person can read them attentively, and afterwards think either that there was no such person as Paul, that these letters were not written by him, or that the facts he refers to as known to his correspondents were not known to them (and these facts suppose and imply the truth of christianity) or that those persons could be deceived with respect to them, he may as well believe there were never such places as Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome, where the christians to whom he wrote lived. In short, he must either not be made as other men are, or be so prejudiced, as to be out of the reach of all reasoning and argument.

It must also be observed, that the greater part of these Epistles were written long before the publication of any of the gospels, so that in fact they are the oldest records of christianity, and to give a clearer idea of the circumstances in which each of them was written,

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ten, and the general object of them, I shall treat them in the order of time in which they were probably written, beginning with the first epistle to the Thessalonians which is agreed by all to have been the first of them.

I would farther observe, that most of these epistles being written upon particular and pressing occasions, and those seemingly temporary ones, there is no appearance of their being intended for the use of the christian church in all ages, tho' in fact, they are of very great use, and must have been so intended by divine providence, and the more on account of their appearing not to have been so intended by the writers; because the writers not having any distant views, were not so particularly upon their guard, but expressed their present feelings without reserve, as men actually do in letters written in confidence upon particular occasions, and these epistles bear all the marks of having been so written.

Still less is there any appearance of the writers imagining themselves to be *inspired* in the composition of these letters. Of this the epistles themselves bear no trace, and in some places the apostle Paul expressly disclaims all inspiration. This, indeed, was quite needless; and the idea of it has done great injury to the proper evidence of christianity. Were not the apostles men who were naturally capable of writing about what they themselves saw and did, and of expressing their own sentiments on the occasions on which they wrote? They evidently were so. This was quite sufficient for their purpose, and it could never be the intention of the
Divine

Divine Being unnecessarily to supersede the natural use of men's faculties.

Considering, therefore, the apostles as men writing in their peculiar circumstances, with their views of things, we are not embarrassed with any objections arising from little imperfections in their manner of writing, or with any inaccuracies that we may perceive in their reasoning. For what else could be expected from *men*, who are not infallible. These incorrectnesses however, are of very small consequence; and a conviction, with which every discerning person must be impressed from reading these epistles, of the undoubted zeal of the apostles in propagating the gospel, accompanied with the most indisputable marks of their being neither enthusiasts nor impostors, but plain sensible men, of genuine piety and integrity, of which we see traces every where, engaged in the propagation of what they deemed to be the most important truth, sparing no labour, and avoiding no risque, I say the full conviction of *this* must necessarily interest every candid reader in favour of christianity. If any person can read these epistles with any other feelings, it is a proof that, whatever he may pretend, or really imagine, his mind is already, from some cause or other, prepossessed against christianity. He has, in fact, some reason for wilhing it may not be true; and in that state of mind the most unexceptionable evidence cannot have its proper effect. That the mind of man may be in this state, not only with respect to religion, but science, taste, politics, and civil history, we see continually. Let those persons, therefore, suspect and examine themselves, but

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more especially let young persons be upon their guard against any thing that tends to indispose their minds for embracing christianity. If they be apprized what christianity truly is, viz. the revelation of a future life, by the resurrection of the dead, that every thing else is either of little moment, or some corruption of genuine christianity; and if they expect only such evidence of the history of Christ and the apostles as they do admit with respect to other histories, that is, the evidence of competent witnesses of facts, stronger indeed, and more definite, but of the same kind, I shall no more doubt of their believing the facts relating to christianity, than they do any others relating to remote countries and remote times, and the influence of this christian faith, christian views and expectations cannot but be most salutary and happy.

Having dwelt so long on this introduction, I proceed to the particular consideration of this epistle.

Thess. I. 1. In the seventeenth chapter of the acts of the apostles you have an account of Paul's preaching the gospel at Thessalonica. It was in his second apostolical progress, when he was accompanied by Silas and Timothy. He had visited the churches of Asia Minor, preached the gospel in Galatia, and going over to Macedonia, had preached at Philippi; but having been imprisoned, and otherwise ill treated in that city, he went to Thessalonica, where he preached first to the Jews for three Sabbaths, and then to the Gentiles. So violent, however, was the persecution from the Jews in this place, that Paul left it, and going by Berea came to

to Athens, from which city, being anxious about the new converts at Thessalonica, he sent Timothy to them, who brought him such an account as gave him great satisfaction. From Athens Paul went to Corinth, and being still anxious about the church at Thessalonica, he wrote to the christians at this place this epistle, in which he encourages them to steadfastness in the christian faith, notwithstanding the difficulties they had to struggle with, both from the Jews and their own countrymen. He likewise gives them more particular information concerning the christian doctrine of the resurrection, which they seem in some respects to have misapprehended.

This epistle was written A. D. 52, and is therefore the oldest writing of any christian. Being undoubtedly authentic, and not written *after*, but during the time of the transactions it alludes to, it supplies a most indisputable evidence of the certainty of those facts which necessarily imply the truth of the whole christian history.

After reading a portion of this epistle, with such remarks as may occur to me, I shall endeavour to express the sense of it in a connected paraphrase, and in a language more familiar and intelligible to us than that of the original.

1. i. e. they were distinguished from the idolatrous Gentiles, as they had been before by the knowledge of the true God, and of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You see here, as upon all other occasions, how the term God is applied to the Father, exclusively of Christ, or any other being. It is a language which would have been highly improper, and could never have taken place

place, if Christ, as the Son of God, had been equal to the Father, in eternity and all divine attributes. You see that, according to the apostle we are to consider the Father only as God, and Christ as our master, or teacher, instructed and authorized by God.

2. We see here the practice of the apostles to pray for particular churches and persons, tho' the state of the churches and of the persons was well known to God, and he would no doubt, do what was right and fit with respect to them. While we are in this imperfect state, anxiety about ourselves and our friends is unavoidable, and to express this before God with proper resignation, is not only highly useful to us, promoting a habit of acknowledging God in all our ways, but, as being, for that reason perhaps, enjoined, as proper to our receiving favours from God.

4. i. e. You are chosen to be the peculiar people of God, or highly favoured by him, distinguished by the best of his gifts, that of the gospel, as the Jews were by their peculiar dispensation.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I Paul, with the concurrence of my companions, Silas and Timothy, address this epistle to you christians in Thessalonica, who are converted from idolatry, to the worship of the one living and true God, and the belief of the gospel of Jesus Christ. May you have all the blessings which this God, and this gospel, can impart to you.

I am

I am truly thankful to God, in my prayers for you, when I consider how much you have already distinguished yourselves by your faithful and affectionate labours in the cause of the gospel, and by your patient hope of the rewards of it. This cannot fail to be pleasing to God, who has favoured you with the knowledge of the gospel, the truth of which was not only proved to you by sufficient arguments, but was confirmed by miraculous gifts of the spirit, which left no room to doubt of its coming from God. You know also that our conversation was agreeable to our profession, especially in our labours and sufferings on your account. In this you have followed our example, and notwithstanding the persecution you have met with, the joy with which you have been filled, through the participation of the miraculous gift of the spirit, has led you so to behave, that you are a pattern to the churches in Macedonia, which are in your neighbourhood, and even to those in Achaia, where I now am, at so great a distance from you. And not only in those countries, but in all christian churches, your faith and zeal are so well known (as if they had been proclaimed with the sound of a trumpet) that they want no information concerning them. For we found them able to inform us, when we were about to inform them, with what readiness you embraced the gospel that we preached, and how in consequence of it, you turned from the worship of idols, to that of the living and true God, and entertained the firmest belief that Christ will come again to raise the dead and judge the world, a truth which had been evidenced by his own resurrection to immortal life, and that you will then be delivered

delivered from those punishments which God will insist on the wicked and impenitent.

Ch. II. 1. The apostle, having given a general account of his planting the gospel among the Thessalonians, and their reception of it, proceeds to remind them of his own disinterested labours on their account, in order to engage their attachment to that gospel which came so well recommended to them, and to induce them to bear with patience and cheerfulness all the trials to which their adherence to it might expose them. For it was natural to them to infer, tho' he does not make the inference for them, that if the profession of the gospel could lead *him* to act with that patience and fortitude, without regard to his reputation or advantage, it ought to induce *them* to act with the same heroism.

2. It was from Philippi, where he had been imprisoned, that Paul went to Thessalonica.

3. The love of praise was a great motive with the Greek philosophers, to whose conduct he seems to allude. In general too they made a considerable gain of their discourses, and they were far from being free from the impurity to which the heathen world was shamefully addicted.

6. As the apostle elsewhere observes, *the workman is worthy of his hire*, and they who preach the gospel have a right to live by the gospel; but he forebore to avail himself of that right, for the greater furtherance of of the gospel.

9. Both at Thessalonica, at Corinth, and at Ephesus, Paul had maintained himself by the trade of a tent maker, and probably he did the same at other places; while

while the more wealthy and considerate churches at a distance had sent him occasionally supplies, as the Philippians, he says, did once and again.

If the most unquestioned indications of an upright mind in this epistle be properly attended to (and I will venture to say there is no instance upon record of any hypocrite writing in this manner) and it be compared with the equally unquestionable zeal of the apostle in preaching the gospel, and the marks of a *sound mind* in conducting himself with the greatest prudence and judgment, a conviction of the truth of christianity will be the necessary result. Let any unbeliever account for the character, the conduct, and the mode of writing, of this apostle upon any other supposition, if he can. If any person thinks that he can, I will venture to say he either has not duly attended to all the circumstances, or has little knowledge of human nature.

THE PARAPHRASE.

In writing to you, Thessalonians, I have still less occasion to speak of the success of my preaching, for you know that it was very great, notwithstanding the opposition that I and my companions met with from the Jews just before at Philippi, and upon our first arrival among yourselves. From this circumstance you will naturally infer the purity of our motives. And indeed it was nothing of our own invention, or that we had any personal interest in, that we taught you, nor did we artfully go about to gain you over to any base purpose of our own, but considering ourselves as employed by God, in a great and important trust, our object was
not

not to recommend ourselves to men, but to approve ourselves to God, by whom we were employed, and who knows the heart, and we can appeal to God, and to yourselves, that we did not study to gain your favour, or your wealth. For as honour has not been our object, so neither has gain, tho' as men employed in an office, we had a natural claim to some emolument from it. But we treated you with tenderness, as a mother who nurses her own children, and so intense was our affection, that, together with the gospel, we were ready to risk even our lives for your benefit.

To convince you of our disinterestedness, you know that we laboured with our own hands night and day, in order to maintain ourselves, without being any charge to you. With respect to our general conduct, we can call God and you to witness the purity of it, that it was truly pious, righteous, and unexceptionable, and it was the great object of our exhortation, to engage you to act in the same manner. A father could not be more earnest with his own children in this respect, endeavouring to persuade you not only to abandon your former vain idols, and the impure rites annexed to that worship, but to act with propriety and dignity, becoming the worshippers of the one true and living God, who has called you from darkness to light, and made you the subjects of his glorious and everlasting kingdom.

13. The apostle having given a short account of his preaching the gospel in Thessalonica, and the manner in which he conducted himself with respect to it, proceeds to express his thankfulness to God for such happy fruits of his preaching, that his disciples there were so soon capable

capable not only of receiving the truths of the gospel, but of acting up to them, and of bearing extreme persecution on that account. He also expresses most eager desire to visit them once more, and consider their conversion as his happiness and glory.

Observe that the apostle here ascribes the happy effects of the Gospel upon the Thessalonians not to any immediate divine influence upon their minds, but to the natural effect of a belief of its truth. It was the mere *word of God*, which by its natural power worked so effectually in them. And certainly all that is necessary to reform men's lives, and to fit them for an happy immortality, is a firm belief of the doctrine of a resurrection and a judgment to come, and that all men shall then receive according to their works. Indeed, it was absurd to suppose that God would provide means naturally adapted to work so favourably upon mens minds, if after all they were not sufficient for the purpose, but required his own supernatural influence to come in aid of them, and any influence of this kind would be as much a miracle as raising the dead. Indeed, they that believe this influence, and depend upon it, represent mankind as actually *so dead in sins*, as that nothing they can do can avail them, so that their conversion is owing to the sovereign and miraculous influence of God upon their minds, operating *when* and *how* he pleases, without any aid from the persons so operated upon. But upon this plan there is an end of all *religion* properly so called, since motives and arguments to excite men to virtue are of no avail.

14. The Romans had not at this time interfered in the progress of christianity, considering it as a sect springing up among the Jews, whom they tolerated every where. But the Jews being settled in every town of note, and having considerable influence, stirred up the Gentiles to do the christians ill offices, and were often the cause of great outrages against them.

15. The pride of the Jews, and their contempt and hatred of other nations, was noticed by all the writers who speak of them; and indeed we see traces enough of it in the gospel history. To express this contempt of the gentiles, they commonly called them *dogs*, a term which our Saviour, to try the faith of a Phenician woman, applied to her, and which it appears she had been used to, and was not particularly offended at it.

16. This was fully verified in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities of the Jewish nation, which, took place in less than twenty years after this epistle was written, and which has continued to this day.

THE PARAPHRASE:

We rejoice, therefore, that you received the gospel, which was preached to you from such distinguished motives, with a just sense of its divine origin and importance, as the word of God, and not of man; containing truths that are capable of producing such an happy effect upon the mind. In consequence of this, you were immediately capable of following the noble example of the christian church at Jerusalem itself, and even of bearing such suffering from your countrymen on account of the gospel as the believing Jews suffered from theirs; and the

the malice of those unbelieving Jews has been most inveterate, having persecuted unto death their own former prophets, our Lord Jesus Christ, and us his followers. In this they shew themselves to be the enemies of God whose messengers we are, and their pride, and their hatred of all other nations besides themselves, are notorious.

What more particularly excites their jealousy and rage, is our preaching the gospel to the gentiles, that *they* may enjoy the blessings of it. This fills up the measure of their iniquity, and accordingly the wrath of God is coming upon them to the uttermost.

It has not been for want of the most intense affection for you that I have not visited you again, notwithstanding I have not been long absent, and this absence has been only in body and, not with respect to my mind; for you are continually in my thoughts; and my wishes to be with you cannot rise higher than they do, I would have been with you in person several times during this my absence, but one adversary or other has prevented me. For, indeed, what greater object have I in this world than *you*, who have been my converts to the faith of the gospel. There is nothing that I more rejoice in the hope of, there is nothing that I shall more glory in, as if it were a crown put upon my head, than to present you to our common Lord, as my converts, and his disciples, at his second coming. This will be the consummation of my glory and happiness.

Ch. III. 1. The apostle continues to express the anxiety he felt on account of the severe trials to which the christians of Thessalonica were exposed, and his

earnest desire to see them, that he might farther confirm them in the faith and hope of the gospel.

3. You see that, in those early ages, men were not tempted by any honours or emoluments of this life. They were apprized that they were not to expect any advantage from the scheme in this world, but that all their hopes of reward were to be in another. Now what could induce men, in the cool possession of themselves, as the apostles evidently were, and thousands of others, naturally lovers of life, and of the pleasures and advantages of it, as well as other men, to entertain these great and distant prospects, and to sacrifice every thing else to them, but the most well grounded faith in the gospel, or such evidence as could not but command the assent of unprejudiced men in their circumstances, who had every possible opportunity of judging, and which, therefore ought to satisfy us. For we have no other ground of faith in facts of ancient date:

8. i. e. they live to purpose, enjoy life, and are happy.

11. You see here, as upon all occasions, that the title of God is appropriated to the Father, and that Christ is not entitled to that appellation but is quite distinct from God, as much as any other man can be. And tho' they are here joined together, it is by no means a proper example of prayer to Christ; but as all power is given to Christ with respect to his church, and he frequently appeared to Paul, and directed the course of his apostolical journies, it was natural for him to desire that he might have the same direction to go where he wished himself.

13. You

13. You see here the great end of our faith in the gospel. It is to be approved before God at the day of judgment. Nothing short of this is ever held out to christians as the object of their faith and hope. We have no reward but at the resurrection of the just, as will farther appear in this very epistle ; and in the mean time we are said to *sleep in Jesus*, or in sure expectation of his coming to raise the dead and judge the world, *our life being as it were hid with Christ in God, that when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then, but not before, we also may appear with him in glory.*

THE PARAPHRASE.

Being therefore exceedingly anxious for you, on account of the trying situation in which I left you, I chose to remain at Athens, where I had no friends or acquaintance, and sent my fellow labourer Timothy to assist and encourage you, and especially to admonish you that the persecution which hath befallen you, tho' grievous, was nothing that you ought to be surprized or much concerned at, as you had been fully apprized of it by us, and had seen myself and my companions exposed to it, and it is the will of God, for the best reasons, that his church should bear it. When I was with you I plainly foretold what has come to pass in this respect.

I was, however anxious, and uncertain about the event, lest by some means or other you should have been induced to abandon your faith in Christ, and thus all our past labour in preaching to you had been lost.

But when I was informed by Timothy on his return that you continued steadfast in the faith, in love to the brethren, and also in an affectionate remembrance of myself, it gave me so much satisfaction, that I was more than ever encouraged to bear up under all my own difficulties in the farther propagation of the gospel. For my happiness consists in the success of my labours with you and others. I am therefore truly thankful to God, the author of all good, for the joy I have on your account; and I continue earnest in my prayers to have another opportunity of visiting you, and giving you whatever exhortation and instruction you may still want.

I shall rejoice if it be the will of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ who has the immediate direction of the affairs of his church, that I should come into your parts again. But whether I return or not, it is my earnest wish and prayer, that what you do know of the gospel may continue to produce the most happy effects, especially of increasing your love to one another, and to all mankind, that it may equal that which I have towards you, and that you may, in all respects, approve yourselves unto God, even the Father, and be presented, spotless at the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ attended by the angels of God, and all his faithful disciples at the last day.

Ch. IV. 1. The apostle having sufficiently expressed his general good opinion of the Thessalonians, and his anxiety about their welfare, proceeds to give them such instructions and advice as he apprehended they more particularly stood in need of. These respected that
open

open lewdness in which the heathens in general and, as we are informed, the Thessalonians in particular, lived, the obligation to labour rather than to be burthensome to others, and a caution with respect to those dismal lamentations which the heathens in general made over their dead, which gives him occasion to explain himself with respect to the christian doctrine of the resurrection.

3. Those who have been educated in the pure principles of the christian religion have no idea of the abominable licentiousness of the heathens, and, especially of the Greeks and Romans, with respect to the commerce of the sexes. The philosophers themselves went no farther than to condemn adultery, and fornication with free born women. The use of prostitutes, and of female slaves, was rather encouraged, and the most horrid excesses, and even unnatural pollutions, were practiced in their religious rites themselves, as all persons acquainted with the state of things in those times well know. The heathens even thought it necessary to allow such practices in the rites of their religion, as they discouraged upon other occasions. As the apostle says, it is a shame to speak of those things which they do in secret, that is, in the most secret rites or *mysteria*, as they were called, of their religion. In Egypt the rise of the Nile, which was necessary for the fertilizing of the country, was thought to depend upon certain practices used by a set of priests maintained for that purpose, which are justly punished with death in this country. Constantine the great abolished this horrid custom, and to the surprize, no doubt of the heathens, the Nile was found to rise to its proper height without that ceremony, while

the christians as naturally imagined that it rose better than ever.

Without revelation men would not naturally consider any thing as a vice which had no obvious ill consequences with respect to society, and as to that purity of *mind*, and dignity of sentiment, which is the perfection of moral character, and which is debased by voluptuousness and criminal pleasures, they had no idea of it, and were not solicitous about it. But as the apostle observes, *fleshly lusts war against the soul*, and debase the mind. It is however, the utter and manifest inconsistency of these vices with the christian character that gives many persons of the present age a dislike to it. For in these respects the maxims of modern unbelievers are as loose as those of the ancients.

6. As the apostle is treating of *lewdness*, both before and after this verse, it is probable that this should be so translated as to refer to the crime of adultery, by which others are injured, and instead of *any matter*, it should be *this matter* i. e. in respect to the thing of which I am now treating.

We may be surprized that the apostle should think it necessary to animadvert at all upon such vices as are recited in this address to christians; but till men were apprized of the purity of the christian precepts, they had no idea of much blame in very gross vices. You will see marks of this in many of the epistles, in which such exhortations are repeated. But in a short time after, such things were not heard of among christians. It is proper that these things should be observed, in order to give us a just idea of the value of christianity, how great
a blessing

a blessing it has been to mankind, in a moral respect, as we are too apt to think lightly of it. We owe to it both the knowledge of a future life, and the proper means of preparing for it.

11. It is very possible that some idle persons, more disposed to talk about religion than to practice it, had taken advantage of the remarkable liberal disposition of the richer christians at Thessalonica, to neglect their own business, and live at the expence of others. There are too many persons of this disposition in all places, and at all times. This the apostle very justly and severely reproves, and indeed his own example in this very case carries a still stronger reproof along with it.

12. Reputably.

THE PARAPHRASE:

As you have been fully instructed with respect to the great object of the gospel, viz. holiness in heart and life, as the only method of recommending you to God, I most earnestly intreat you, as speaking in the name of Christ, that you strictly conform to it, and endeavour to make greater proficiency in it daily. You cannot have forgotten what precepts and instructions I gave you, as necessary to be observed by all christians, and especially that you should abstain from all kinds of lewdness, to which your heathen neighbours are peculiarly addicted, that you should in all respects preserve yourselves pure, as if you were vessels appropriated to sacred uses, and not live in such licentiousness as the heathens, who are strangers to the true God, and the precepts of a pure

religion, without scruple indulge themselves in, especially that you should abstain from such criminal indulgences as would injure others, because such persons shall not escape the righteous judgments of God, concerning which I have given you repeated warnings. The object of our religion is holiness, and it does not admit of the impure rites and practices of the heathen worship. To disregard these pure precepts, therefore, is to despise not man but God, who by the gift of his holy spirit hath confirmed to us the truth of the gospel.

With respect to another article of christian virtue, viz. brotherly love I have no occasion to give you particular instructions. For you both know, and have observed, the precepts which God hath equally written on your hearts and taught you in the gospel on that subject, and your brethren in Macedonia have been in an especial manner the objects of your kindness, tho' there is room to exert yourselves still more in this respect. But I would have those who have been relieved by the benefactions of the richer sort among you not to be unnecessarily troublesome to them, but to endeavour to maintain themselves by their own labour, as I taught you both by precept and example; that the character of christians may not suffer, but appear respectable to your unconverted neighbours, and also that you may always have a resource within yourselves against want, without depending upon others.

13. The apostle having given the Thessalonians proper advice with respect to those impurities to which they had been addicted in their heathen state, and the obligation to labour, so as to avoid a life of idleness,
and

and a mean dependence upon others, proceeds to give them some advice concerning those dismal howlings and lamentations which the heathens usually made over their dead, and which did not become christians, who believed the doctrine of a resurrection, of which he here reminds them, and concerning which he gives them some more particular information.

The apostle compares the state of death to that of sleep, which, when it is sound, is a state of perfect insensibility, undisturbed by pleasing or by painful sensations.

14. The doctrine of a resurrection of the dead appears to have been known to all the Jews in the time of our Saviour, when it was the belief of all the Pharisees, and of the great bulk of the nation, tho' they had fallen into some mistakes with respect to it. They also considered it as having been the belief of their ancestors in remote ages. Our Saviour himself evidently considered it in the same light, and therefore I do not see how it could have been otherwise, whatever difficulty we may find in accounting for the little mention that is made of it, or the little or no reference that is made to it, in the books of the old Testament. As such a doctrine as that of a resurrection could never have been discovered by man, and what the heathen philosophers had no idea of, and what their peculiar tenet concerning a *separate soul* would lead them off from, it must have been communicated by God to mankind, in some very early period of the world, probably prior to the Mosaic institution, or even to the flood, so that it is no wonder the record of it is not extant, tho' the effects of it remained.

mained. But when this doctrine was corrupted, as it was among the Jews, and was destined by God to be communicated to all mankind, it was with the greatest wisdom and propriety that he not only made a fresh discovery of it, but also exemplified it in the person of Christ, the great preacher of this most important doctrine, in order to give mankind the fullest assurance of this great event. The translation of Enoch, supposing him to have preached the same doctrine, would, no doubt, give men a knowledge of another life and state and might convince them that God could make men immortal notwithstanding the effects of the fall, but the resurrection of a man to immortal life after a state of unquestionable death was calculated to give men, who expected to die themselves, much more complete satisfaction with respect to the same thing.

17. It is very remarkable that the apostle, in comforting these Thessalonians with respect to their departed friends, makes no mention of any happiness that they enjoyed in a state between death and the resurrection, tho' it be a topic of consolation that is never overlooked by those who believe in that state, and indeed is unavoidable. It may therefore, safely be concluded that the apostle knew of no such state, but thought that, agreeable to the tenor of scripture on all other occasions, death was a state of mere insensibility; and that the great hope of the gospel was the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to raise the virtuous dead to a state of life and happiness. On the hypothesis of the dead being supremely happy, and continuing to be so till the resurrection, it would have been so far from being necessary to inform them,

them, that those who should be alive at the coming of Christ would have no advantage over those who had been dead, that these would have had a great and manifest advantage over their brethren, having enjoyed the greatest happiness, in the presence of God and of Christ, many ages before them. All that the apostle was able to say was, that they who are now dead shall not be, upon the whole, in a worse condition than those who shall be alive, because they would be raised to immortal life before any change should take place in the living.

18. This is abundant consolation. It may indeed, appear more desirable to enter upon a state of happiness immediately after death; and this may be a reason why christians are so ready to adopt this opinion. But we ought to be satisfied with the happiness that God promised us, and which will be revealed in due time, viz. the resurrection of the just.

I would observe that the phrase *being with the Lord* evidently refers to the state after the resurrection. It is after the meeting of the Lord in the air, and not before, that any persons are said to be *with him*. Agreeably to this, our Lord himself says to his apostles, *I shall come again and take you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.*

THE PARAPHRASE.

The most important advice and instructions that I have to give you relates to the state of the dead, and the grief you express for them. In this respect you ought to differ from the heathens, with whom it is very natural to make dismal lamentations over the dead,
since

face they have no hope of ever seeing them again. But if we believe the christian doctrine of a resurrection, which has been confirmed to us by that of Christ himself, we believe not only in his resurrection, but that all christians will rise again, and that Christ, at his second coming will collect them all together, and appear along with them.

I must also inform you of what I learned from Christ himself, that they who shall be alive at his second coming, and who therefore will not die at all, shall nevertheless have no advantage over those who had been in a state of death : which being only a temporary thing, you ought rather to consider as a kind of sleep. For upon the appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven, accompanied by angels, proclaiming his approach with joyful acclamations, as with the sound of the trumpet, his first care and attention will be given to those of his faithful followers who shall then be in a state of death, and that he will first exert his miraculous power in raising them to life. After this great event in their favour, and not before, they who shall be then alive, will be changed, so as to be brought into the same state with those who shall be raised from the dead, incorruptible and immortal, and joining those who had been dead, shall be caught up into the clouds, as our Lord himself was and meet him there. After this, we shall all, the living and the dead, be with him, and be happy with him, for ever. Wherefore give not way to the doleful lamentations of the heathens, but comfort one another as becomes christians, with these important considerations.

Ch.

Ch. V: 1. The apostle having given the Thessalonians the most important information concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the happiness that is reserved for all the faithful followers of Christ after death, now proceeds to exhort them to such christian duties as were necessary to prepare them for that great event.

2. Of this our Lord himself had given repeated and express intimation, both by parables, and the most solemn assurances and admonitions.

4 Knowledge and virtue are often compared to *light* in the scriptures, and vice and ignorance to *darkness*. On this idea the apostle here founds a little allegory, comparing christians to men awake, and standing upon guard, and the rest of the world as in darkness, careless, asleep, or even drunken, as persons are apt to be in the night.

8. Soldiers upon watch are always armed, and therefore a christian should put on his armour, to which the apostle compares the faith and virtues of christianity, which are our defence in what the apostle calls the christian warfare.

9. Here the apostle alludes perhaps to the saying of our Lord, *God sent not his son to condemn the world, but that the world thro' him might be saved.*

10. i. e. Whether we shall be alive, or dead, at his coming.

12. It does not appear that any regular officers were at this time appointed in the church of Thessalonica. There could be no occasion for this till a church consisted of many members, and was well established. The apostle therefore probably referred to such extraordinary

ry teachers as Timothy, and others, whom he had left with them, and occasionally sent to them.

THE PARAPHRASE.

As to the precise time when Christ shall return, to raise the dead and judge the world, I have no occasion to inform you, that we are wisely left in ignorance of it, except that we are in general apprized that it will be sudden, and unexpected, as the coming of a thief in the night. When the vicious, and dissolute part of mankind shall expect nothing but pleasure and peace, utter destruction shall come upon them, and they shall be no more able to escape than a woman with child the pains of labour.

But you, my christian brethren, are so well apprized of this, that this great day can never overtake you in this manner. We who are enlightened by the gospel, and as it were live in its open daylight, are not liable to those surprizes which come in the night. Let us not therefore pass our time in sleep and unconcern, but let us be vigilant, as soldiers upon guard. This state of drowsiness, as well as that of drunkenness, is incident to persons in the night only. We therefore who call ourselves *the children of the day*, should watch, and be sober, like armed centinels upon duty, having for a breast plate the faith of the gospel, with love to all mankind, and for an helmet the glorious hope that is set before us. For the end of the gospel to the profession of which we are called, is not the judgment of God due to sin, which we have forsaken, but everlasting life. Christ died to deliver us from all iniquity, that whether we be alive
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at his second coming, or in a state of death, we may live for ever with him. Let us therefore comfort one another, and promote our common edification, as I doubt not you do.

More especially, let me exhort you to shew particular respect to those who labour to instruct and admonish you in the principles and duties of the gospel, to esteem them for their labours, and likewise that you live in peace among yourselves.

We exhort you to warn those whose behaviour is irregular, comfort the timid, strengthen the weak, and exercise the greatest patience and forbearance towards all persons ; and especially, as becomes christians, entertain no malice or revenge, and never return evil for evil but always do good and this not to christians only, but to all men.

16. The apostle concludes this excellent epistle with a variety of miscellaneous advices, delivered in a very concise manner, so that they might be easily retained in memory, and make a strong impression upon it.

17 i. e. at all proper and stated times. Thus *the continued burnt offering* unto the law meant the sacrifice of every morning and evening, and not that there was no intermission in offering them. In one sense, indeed, we may be said to *pray without ceasing*, viz. by preserving upon our minds an habitual sense of God, as present with us, which it is our duty, and great happiness, to cultivate. It is the perfection of religious temper and character ; but to *pray always* in any other sense, is impossible, and the attempt would interfere with the most important duties of life.

19 The holy spirit having descended upon the first christians accompanied with an appearance of *flames of fire*, gives a propriety to this figure of *quenching it*, meaning the doing any thing that unfits a person for cherishing, or keeping, up this holy flame, either by an irregular improper use of spiritual gifts, or by any thing sinful in a man's temper and conduct.

20. Exhortations are called *prophecies* as well as foretelling things to come. The ancient prophets were teachers of righteousness, and whatever was delivered by them in the name of God, whether an admonition, or a prophecy properly so called, was thence usually termed a *prophecy*; and the christian preachers not having the eloquence of the heathen Orators, would be in danger of being despised on that account. That the preaching of Paul himself was despised he himself sufficiently informs us. But he says that, *through the foolishness of preaching, God saved those who believed*.

22. i. e. every kind of evil, or what may lead to evil. The former is probably the better sense.

By *peace* was meant all *happiness*, which can only be enjoyed in a time of peace. The customary salutation among the Jews, and among the people of the East in general, even to this day, is *peace be with you*. God therefore being called the *God of peace*, is thereby considered as the author of all good, or happiness.

Here the apostle probably alludes to the doctrine of the threefold division of man by the Greek philosophers, but does not imply the truth of that system, much less that these three parts of the body, the soul, or the spirit, were each capable of a separate subsistence. By *the soul* they,

they meant the sensitive faculties of man, such as are necessary to animal life, and by the *spirit* the mental powers or the higher principles of a rational nature. What the apostle meant was, that whatever man be, or of whatever he consist, all his powers and faculties should be consecrated to God. This language of the apostle will no more authorize us to suppose that the soul, or the *spirit*, can subsist without the body, than that what is here called *soul*, can subsist without the *spirit*, or the *spirit*, without the soul.

26. i. e. according to the customary solemn and affectionate salutations in those times.

27. This is a most solemn form of adjuration, as oaths were administered in those times, when the words constituting the oath, as distinguished from a mere affirmation, were not pronounced by the person to whom the oath was administered, but by the person who administered it. To answer to this solemn form of adjuration was to *take the oath* as our Saviour did, when the high priest *adjured him by the living God*. Oaths, therefore, or solemn appeals to God are not improper on solemn occasions, even out of a court of judicature.

THE PARAPHRASE

Notwithstanding the tribulation which you have been called to endure for the sake of the gospel, avail yourselves of the consolations which it supplies, and rejoice continually in the prospect of the glorious reward which it insures to you.

Neglect not the performance of the duty of prayer at the stated times for it.

From a full persuasion of the goodness of God respecting you in all his appointments, be thankful for every thing and for every occurrence. For this disposition of mind God, who has favoured you with the gift of the gospel, requires of you.

More particularly, cherish that temper of mind which is most favourable to the spiritual gifts with which you have been distinguished. Preserve yourselves as the unpolluted temples, of the holy spirit of God

Despise not the preaching of the gospel, and the usual interpretation of the scriptures in your assemblies, tho' they be destitute of the rhetorical ornaments of the Greek orators, to which you have been accustomed. At the same time receive no manner of doctrine without proper examination; but, after proper inquiry, adhere to every thing that is solid and right, and reject every thing that is evil of every kind, and in every degree; and may God, the author of all good, impart to you all spiritual blessings, and thereby sanctify you, or render you fit for himself: and may all your powers and faculties be ever employed in the best manner, that you may be preserved blameless, and without spot, till the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be assured that nothing will ever be wanting on the part of God to this good end; for this is the great object of the gospel which he has vouchsafed to you.

As I and my companions continually pray for you,
do

CH. I.**II. THESSALONIANS.**

do you also pray for us, and salute all the brethren in the most affectionate manner for us all.

I strictly charge and adjure you, that you cause this epistle to be read to all the disciples in your city, and I conclude with sincerely wishing you all the blessings of the gospel of Christ.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE**THESSALONIANS.**

CHAP. I. 1. This second epistle to the Thessalonians appears to have been written not many months after the former, viz. A. D. 52. while the apostle continued at Corinth, still accompanied by Timothy and Silas, or Silvanus. He appears to have received a favourable account of the reception of his former letter, but withal saw reason to write another, in order to give the members of this new church some farther admonitions and informations concerning some mistakes they were still under, and to inforce such articles in his former advices as they had not given sufficient attention to.

2. It cannot but be observed that, in the usual tenor of scripture language, *God* and *Christ* are carefully distinguished, the appellation of *God* being given to the

NOTES ON

Rather only, exclusively of Christ, as well as of all other beings.

5. The maxim of God's moral Government being well known to these christians, they would take it for granted that the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, which could not with propriety be made in this world, would be made in another.

8. We see here, as in the former epistle, that these persecuted christians are referred for their reward to the second coming of Christ, to raise the dead and to judge the world. No hint is given them of any recompence between the time of death and the resurrection, which the apostle could never have overlooked, if he had known of any such state.

9. These terms, literally interpreted, would imply that the wicked are to be finally destroyed, and an end put to their existence. But the term *destruction* is often used in the scriptures to denote *calamity* in general, and such as has its period; and if the wicked be raised from the dead, and continue to exist, it is not possible, unless the constitution of their natures be entirely changed, but that their sufferings will, in length of time, work a favourable change in the state of their minds, so that after an adequate punishment, their sufferings may be remitted, though it is probable they will never acquire that state of glory in which the virtuous will be established. But we are wisely kept in ignorance concerning the purposes of God beyond the resurrection and the day of judgment. Of this we may be confident, that our maker, and the judge of all the earth, will do that, which is right, and consequently that *it will be well with*
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the righteous, but that woe will be to the wicked, since they will both receive according to their works.

THE PARAPHRASE.

T Paul, accompanied by Timothy and Sylvanus, address this second epistle to the members of the christian church at Thessalonica, who believe in the one true God, the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ. May you enjoy all favour, and all the blessings which God bestows upon mankind, by the gospel of his Son.

We esteem it our duty, as it is highly proper in itself to thank God for your increasing steadfastness in the faith, and that the effects of it appear in the increasing affection which you bear towards each other. On this account you are the subject of our boasting in other churches, as also on account of the patience and fortitude which you have shewn in all the troubles and persecutions with which your faith has been tried. But in this you ought to rejoice, as what will certainly be followed by distinguished honour and happiness in the kingdom of God, after that day of righteous judgment, in which he will reward all the faithful disciples of his Son, and confound all his enemies. It is by the prospect of this that you are enabled to bear your present sufferings. It is indeed just that God, according to his promise, should exemplarily punish those who now distress you. But as to you who are at present in distress on this account, wait with patience, together with us, and all the disciples and followers of Christ, for the glorious time when he shall return from heaven, with power and great glory, accompanied by the angels, his

ministers, flaming as it were with vengeance against all those who, notwithstanding the better information they have received, continue in ignorance, and in opposition to the gospel of Christ. In that awful day, all such enemies of the gospel, and of you who profess it, shall be for ever driven from the joyful and glorious presence of that Saviour, who in that great day will appear truly glorious in the eyes of all his faithful disciples, and will be looked up to with joy and reverence by all his followers, and among the rest by you, who by our means were converted to christianity.

It is therefore the subject of our daily prayers, that God would so preserve you in the faith of the gospel, that you may, be worthy of being distinguished in this manner, that all his gracious designs in calling you to the knowledge of the gospel may be fully accomplished; that by your proper conduct you may be an honour to the gospel, which may redound to your glory, according to the gracious intention of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ch. II. In the former epistle the apostle had spoken of the coming of Christ to judgment; and it seems that, by some means or other, the christians at Thessalonica had imagined that great day was near at hand. It is possible that this might have arisen from the apostle having used this expression *we who are alive and remain* tho' it was only a form of speech, the writer putting himself in the place of those who would be alive at that time. It seems however, that other christians had entertained this opinion, and had endeavoured to bring the Thessalonians into it, and had alledged some other

other epistle of Paul perhaps had even forged one in his name, for this seems to be insinuated.

To this misapprehension we are indebted for a most valuable prophecy concerning the great apostacy from the truth of the gospel, of which our Lord himself had given obscure intimations in the parable of the tares, and on other occasions, and of which we have a more distinct account in the revelation of John.

Of this great event we at this day are better judges than any persons living at the time of the apostles. In their times this power was not risen; the principles only on which it was founded then operating, and in a very feeble manner, whereas it has since come to its full growth, and is now even upon its decline.

There have, indeed, been various interpretations of this famous prophecy; but I cannot help thinking that the application of it to those corruptions of christianity which we generally term *popish*, and to that astonishing usurpation of power by the bishops of Rome is by much the most easy and natural. That the apostles themselves had what we may call historical knowledge of the fulfilment of this prophecy is not probable. The ancient prophets had no just idea, of that *kingdom of Christ* which they announced to the world. The real use of prophecy respects those who see the accomplishment of it; and it is sufficient for the purpose, that the event be described in such a manner, tho' still so obscurely as not to be understood at the time, as to satisfy those who see the accomplishment of it, that God alone, who sees the end of all things from their beginnings,

could

could have given. Such a description of it at that time. There was a peculiar reason why this particular prophecy should not have been a plain one, for in that case, as it respects the future state of the christian church, in which the scriptures, as being the rule of our faith and conduct, are continually read, it would have been impossible, in the nature of things, that it should have been fulfilled.

1. In our translation we have here the form of an oath which is quite unnecessary and improper. The better reading is, not *by*, but *concerning*. This at least makes it much better sense.

2. As the apostle informs us that he signed his letters with his own hand, and says that he should do so for the future, in order to distinguish his epistles, it is not improbable but there had been some forged epistles of his produced to the Thessalonians.

3. It by no means follows that because the *man of sin* is used, that some individual person is intended. It may be a succession of persons. Thus, in the prophecies of Daniel a *king* often means a succession of kings. Whatever be meant by it must be understood of a *state*, or *power*, which shall be the cause of much wickedness, and that it shall be utterly destroyed in some sense or other by the coming of Christ, and in the former of these particulars it certainly agrees very well with the church of Rome, the maxims of which have furnished a cover for much wickedness, and which is itself founded on imposture and tyranny.

4. i. e. all magistrates who are sometimes stiled *gods* in scripture. The term *all that is worshipped* is appropriated

pliated to the magistrates of the Roman empire, who ranked above all princes at that time. That the popes have been styled *God's viceregents*, and have usurped all power in the temple, or church, of God, acting as if they were God, and that they have been often so denominated, is well known.

6. It seems as if the apostle had told the Thessalonians plainly what power it was that stood in the way of this man of sin, so as to prevent his rise, and that he did not chuse to mention it in writing, which agrees very well with the supposition of its being the *Roman empire*, concerning which, as it was then in its greatest power, there was evident reason why he should not write very plainly, and there was an early tradition in the christian church, that this was the apostle's meaning.

7. Those general principles which afterwards branched out and produced all the corruptions of popery, existed in the time of the apostle. They were called *anti-christ* by the apostle John, and *science falsely so called* by Paul; being the doctrines of those who are generally called *Gnostics*, concerning which I shall have occasion to speak more largely hereafter. Also the spirit of usurpation and contention appeared at this time in the christian church, as the epistles of Paul clearly evince especially at Corinth, where he then was, and this spirit, by improving every favourable opportunity, led to the amazing power, and absolute supremacy, of the church of Rome over other churches, and finally over all other powers, civil as well as religious.

While

While the Roman empire subsisted, it was not possible for the church of Rome to assume much power, especially in things temporal; but upon the removal of the seat of empire from Rome, the bishops of that church, which was before immensely rich, had great authority in temporal affairs, and afterwards, they became temporal sovereigns themselves, besides acquiring great influence in the civil affairs of other kingdoms. This circumstance made it unlike all other kingdoms, as is mentioned in the prophecies of Daniel.

8. What is meant by the *spirit of our Lord's mouth* is not certain. It may mean his word, or the gospel, the true knowledge of which may contribute to the downfall of the church of Rome. Or it may express, in a figurative manner, the ease with which our Lord will destroy this power, as if by the very breath of his mouth. Also what is meant by *the coming of Christ* in this place is not certain. As the destruction of Jerusalem is supposed to be called his coming, so the destruction of Antichrist may also be called another coming, these being great events in which christianity is much interested, as if the head of the church and of all things in it, had come in person to look after its affairs. Or lastly, some remains of the corrupt principles and practices of popery may continue to the proper coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven.

THE PARAPHRASE.

With respect to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the solemn assembling of all his faithful followers to meet him on that occasion, I earnestly desire

desire, that you will not be disturbed by any pretended revelation, or by any person's discourse on the subject, or by any pretended letter of mine, so as to imagine that great day is near at hand. Be not misled in any of the ways that I have mentioned; for that great day will not come till after there has been a great apostacy, or falling away from the true faith of the gospel and there appear a power which is properly characterized by the title of the *man of sin*, and the *son of perdition*, who shall assume more power than any civil magistrate or prince, and even than the imperial dignity itself, which is superior to all other temporal powers. For as if he were the immediate vicegerent of God himself, he will establish his power in the church of God, claiming even divine honours and authority.

You may remember that when I was with you, I apprized you of these things. I also then informed you what it was that prevented the rise of this anti-christian power. For the causes and principles of this apostacy do even now exist, but that power which for the present prevents the rise of this man of sin, will continue to do so, till it will be removed. But then the pretensions of that wicked power will be advanced, and it will be fully revealed. However, notwithstanding the very great height to which this power will arise, it will certainly be destroyed, as by the breath of our Lord's mouth, and all the remains of it will entirely be done away at his glorious coming.

10. It is hardly possible in general terms to describe the spirit of popery, and the causes of its rise, more clearly than is done here. The various impostures, and pretended

pretended miracles, of the papists are well known to all protestants. They were also so barefaced and absurd, that men who were really lovers of truth, and who were willing to take any pains in the investigation of it, would not have been deceived by them. But things were so circumstanced, that it was the interest of the temporal powers to act in concert with the popes, and to assent to their usurpations, which acquired strength with time.

12. This judicial blindness is often mentioned in the Scriptures. In our Saviour's time it was the case with the Jews, as well as with Pharaoh in former times. It is produced by such perverseness and obstinacy, as leads men to fight the strongest evidence of those truths which are unfavourable to their vicious inclinations and pursuits. That these dispositions will blind the mind in the very plainest cases, we see every day; and if there be any proper objects of punishment, persons under this influence certainly are such.

13. We are not to infer from this, or any similar expression in the New Testament, that God acts immediately upon the minds of men, to sanctify them, without the use of their own endeavours, and the means that are naturally adapted to that end, such as are furnished in the gospel itself. The *holy spirit* always means the miraculous gifts of the spirit, by which the gospel was confirmed. They are the truths of this gospel, and especially that of a resurrection and a future life, which was brought to light by it, that, operating in a natural way, reformed the world, and sanctify the hearts of men.

10. This

16. This is only another mode of praying: that these christians may obtain all the blessings of the gospel, of which Christ is the founder; and the expression is not to be understood literally, as if Christ had himself immediate access to the hearts of men, and administered consolation to them. Indeed, God himself does this only by means of natural causes, by such knowledge as is naturally adapted to produce that effect. In like manner God gives us our daily bread, but not in a miraculous manner. It is always in the use of our own labour and industry. We are, indeed, directed to pray for this, and also that God would cleanse our hearts, and give us a right spirit; but we shall deceive ourselves if we look for an answer to any such prayers as these by a proper interference of God, out of the usual course of nature. Our bodies are subsisted, and our hearts are cleansed, the one by bread, for which we sow the ground, and the other by those considerations with which we should carefully impress our minds; and we must thank God that we have a proper soil to cultivate, and the knowledge of those truths which are adapted to improve our dispositions, and fit us for future happiness; and withal we should be thankful that he gives us skill to cultivate the ground, and capacity to discern the truth, and act according to it.

THE PARAPHRASE.

This antichristian power will advance itself by the most wicked means, making use of pretended signs and miracles, and other unrighteous artifices, to raise his power.

power. By this means he shall effectually impose upon those whose minds being abandoned to wickedness, and destitute of that love of truth which leads men into the way of salvation, will render them easy dupes to their impositions. On this account God will be justified in suffering them to be so deluded and imposed upon, that they may fall into that condemnation which is the proper consequence of their indisposition to receive the truth, and the pleasure they take in wickedness.

But this, my brethren, beloved of God, is far from being your character. We thank God that, from the beginning of our preaching the gospel to you, there were evident tokens of God's favourable intention with respect to you, from which I have no doubt of your being destined for future happiness; which can only be secured by that holiness of heart and life which is the effect of true faith, of that faith which has been confirmed by the gift of the holy spirit. This is the faith to which you are called by the gospel, the end of which is that *glory* which you will obtain at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With this glorious prospect continue firm in the profession of every thing that you have been taught by me, either in person or by letter. And now may our Lord Jesus Christ, the same who will return with so much glory, and who now influences your hearts by the gospel; and may God, even our common father, who hath originally loved us, and has given us ground of the most solid consolation and good hope, through his goodness to us, comfort you in your tribulation, and
confirm

confirm you in every good principle, and in all right conduct.

Ch. III: 1. The apostle concludes this epistle with expressing his good wishes to those to whom he was writing, and with repeating the admonitions he had given them before not to live an idle disorderly life, depending upon others, from which we may infer that his former admonitions on this subject had not been sufficiently regarded.

2. In this the apostle probably alludes to the unbelieving Jews, who had driven Paul from Thessalonica, and cruelly persecuted the christians in that place.

3. Here the apostle seems to use the word *faith* in a different sense, from that in which it is used immediately before, viz. for fidelity.

5. Some suppose this means the patience of Christ, as an example to us, the word *coming* not being mentioned.

10. This was probably a proverbial expression which the apostle had made use of.

15. This does not seem to amount to a regular excommunication, for it is probable as I have observed, that the church at Thessalonica was not then regularly constituted. There were no elders or deacons then appointed, and no regular discipline established.

16. The Vulgate has *in this place* the reading *τοῦ* for *τοῦ*.

17. It is probable, as I have observed, that some persons had pretended to receive letters from the apostle, or had read one forged in his name to the Thessalonians. Therefore to prevent any imposition of this kind,

kind; he observes, that he should always write the salutations at the close of his epistles with his own hand, having made use of an amanuensis for the body of the letter.

THE PARAPHRASE.

In the last place, my christian brethren, pray for us, that our labours in preaching the gospel may have the same glorious success in other places that it has had with you; and also that we may be delivered from the malice of our enraged persecutors. For many are so far from embracing the gospel, that they do every thing in their power to oppose the propagation of it. But God is faithful to his promise and if you continue your zeal in his service, will establish you in all good, and keep you from all evil. And I am fully persuaded that as you have hitherto been obedient to the gospel of Christ preached by me, you will continue to be obedient, and may God preserve you in his fear and love, and in patient waiting for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As I understand that you have not paid sufficient attention to my former admonition, with respect to labour and industry, I now repeat my injunctions on that subject, in the name of the Lord Jesus; that you give no countenance to those who live in a manner so contrary to every principle of duty, and to my precepts and example. You know your obligation to follow the example we set you, and our behaviour was very different from this. We did not live at the expence of any man, but laboured hard that we might not be burthened

then some to any of you, not that we might not have held ourselves excused from bodily labour, while we were engaged in your service, by preaching the gospel to you, but we chose to set you an example of industry and independence ; and when we were with you we observed, that if any man refused to work, he did not deserve to eat.

For we are informed that some among you live an idle disorderly life, minding no business of their own, and officiously meddling with that of others. All such persons we commend in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they patiently submit to honest labour, and live by their own industry. Be not weary of this labour, or of any thing that is your duty, and if any continue still disobedient to our admonition, avoid their society, that they may be ashamed, but do not abandon them entirely, but endeavour to reclaim them as brethren, tho' their conduct be in this respect unworthy of their relation to you.

And now may the author of all good grant you all kinds of happiness at all times, and may his presence be ever with you.

I shall conclude this epistle with my usual salutation, written with my own hand, so as, to prevent any imposition, and I propose to do so in all my future epistles. May all the blessings of the gospel attend you. Amen.

NOTES ON

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE G A L A T I A N S.

THE apostle Paul had preached the gospel in Galatia (a part of Asia Minor inhabited by Gauls, who had invaded this country and settled in it, about two hundred and fifty years before Christ) during his second apostolical progress, A. D. 50. Thence he proceeded to Corinth, where he continued two years, and probably before he left that place, or about A. D. 53, he wrote this epistle.

The occasion of it was, that some Jewish christians, zealous for the law of Moses, had, in the absence of the apostle, who appears not to have made a long stay in the country, so as fully to confirm them in the knowledge of the gospel, taught them that it was necessary for all christians to conform to the laws of Moses, and had probably alledged, that the principal apostles, such as Peter, James and John, had insisted upon it, and that only Paul, whose apostleship was questionable, taught any other doctrine.

On this account he begins with insisting largely upon his authority as an apostle, as equal to that of Peter, or any other, since he received his knowledge of the gospel from Christ himself in person, and he reasons largely on the freedom of the Gentile converts from the ceremonial law of Moses, and on the great impropriety

priety, and danger, of imposing it upon them. But it by no means follows from any thing that the apostle here observes, that the Jewish christians were authorized to abandon their law, and discontinue the practice of circumcising, sacrificing, &c. This law was imposed upon the Jews by the most express divine appointment, and we have no account of their being released from it by the same divine authority, which alone was sufficient for the purpose.

Ch. I 1. i. e. Not deriving my mission from other apostles, or even from God by their appointment, but from Jesus Christ himself, and consequently from God his Father. Here again you see how Jesus Christ is distinguished from God, to whom he was subordinate, and by whose power, and not his own, he was raised from the dead.

6 It was about three years from his planting the churches of Galatia to his writing this letter.

7. i. e. A gospel with other terms of salvation than that which I preached unto you, besides which there can be no other.

9. i. e. Let him be no longer considered as a christian. but be regarded in the same light as if he had abandoned the profession of christianity.

10. Do I persuade God or men not to be displeased with me.

i. e. Do I study to please God or man?

12. It was peculiar to the apostle Paul to have received both his knowledge of the gospel, and his commission to be an apostle, from Christ himself in person, after his ascension.

10. i. e. With man.

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19 This is

19. This James, from his residing all his life time in Jerusalem, is often considered as the bishop of that place. None of the apostles, however, were properly bishops of any particular place, but had a general superintendence over all christian churches wherever they went. It is therefore absurd in the popes to pretend to derive their authority from Peter, as if he had been the first bishop of Rome.

21. Probably Tarsus in Cilicia, the place of Paul's nativity.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I Paul, constituted an apostle, neither mediately nor immediately by man, but by Jesus Christ himself, and by God his Father, who confirmed his mission by raising him from the dead, together with all the brethren who are with me, address this epistle to the christian churches in Galatia.

May you enjoy all favour and blessing from God the Father, and especially those which he has bestowed upon mankind by Jesus Christ, the object of whose mission was to deliver us from sin, and all the vices of the world, according to the gracious designs of God, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen.

I cannot help expressing my surprise that you should be so soon alienated in your affections from me, who planted the gospel among you, and that you have in fact embraced a quite different gospel, tho' in truth there can be no other that is genuine, and they who have created this disturbance, have perverted the genuine gospel.

pel. However, should I myself, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which I first preached unto you, let him be anathema. I say again, if any man preach among you any other gospel, let him be excommunicated, or cut off from the society of christians. Do you imagine that it is my object to recommend myself to men or to God, or that my conduct is calculated to please men, especially the judaizing teachers whose influence is so great in the christian church. If that was my object, I could not be the servant of Jesus Christ.

Be assured, my brethren, that the gospel which I first preached to you was no human invention, which you are at liberty to abandon, or alter. I did not learn it of any man, but received it by immediate commission from Jesus Christ. This you may easily conclude from my history.

You have been informed that I was educated in the strictest principles of the Jewish religion, and my zeal for it was such, as led me to persecute the church of Christ; and in this, and every other mark of zeal for my religion, I exceeded all persons of my age and nation, and extended my zeal even beyond the law of Moses, to the traditions of our elders. But when it pleased God, the author of my being, to grant me the special favour of calling me to the faith of Christ, and to appoint me to preach the glad tidings of the gospel to the Gentiles, I did not apply to any man for instruction. I did not even return to Jerusalem, to confer or advise with those who were apostles before me, but I went to preach in Arabia, and then returned to Damas-

cus; and it was three years after that I went to Jerusalem, to converse with Peter, and I continued with him only fifteen days. I did not even see any other of the apostles, except James the brother of Jesus. Of the truth of this I give you my most solemn assurance.

After this I preached the gospel in Syria and Cilicia, of which country I am a native, but I continued unknown to the Jewish christians, and all that they knew of me was that, whereas I had been a violent persecutor of the gospel, I was become a preacher of it, and they praised God on that account.

Ch. 11. The apostle, in vindication of his character and conduct proceeds to shew, by the continuation of his own history, that he was not inferior in authority to any of the apostles, not having received his knowledge of the gospel from them; that the principal apostles, had been fully satisfied with respect to his commission, and that he had been so far from being governed by them, he had taken the liberty to oppose Peter himself, when he thought his conduct reprehensible.

1. There has been a good deal of difficulty about the time of this journey of Paul to Jerusalem. I cannot help thinking, with several learned men, that there has been some mistake in copying the number in this place, and that it should have been four years, and not fourteen, if they are to be reckoned from the first journey. Four years exactly did intervene between those journeys; but it is somewhat remarkable that the second journey was fourteen years after the death of Christ, and the first preaching of the gospel. This then may be the journey in which he was accompanied by Barnabas,

bas, being sent on a collection of money for the poor christians at Jerusalem.

2 It is conjectured that the original reading was *not as tho' I were running, or had run, in vain*. Theo. Rep. i, 59. W.

This was probably in consequence of the revelation made to Agabus of the famine that was to be in the country, on which he and Barnabas were sent to Antioch, on a collection for the poor christians at Jerusalem.

Had this been Paul's third journey to Jerusalem, when the decree was made by the apostles about the freedom of the Gentile christians from the Mosaic law, there would have been no occasion for any caution with respect to his having preached the gospel to the Gentiles. This was, therefore, most probably a former journey.

10. i. e. which I was then giving particular attention to, and busied about; which makes it still more probable that this was the journey four years after the first, when he brought the collection for the poor Saints, whose numbers were such that it appeared that they would want farther supplies, as we find they did.

12. These were probably the same persons of whom we have an account Acts xv 1. when we read that "*certain men who came down from Judea to Antioch, taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved.*" The apostle James, who resided at Jerusalem, might perhaps at that time be a little inclined to this opinion, for as the persons who taught this doctrine, as that of James, were zealous christians, we must suppose that they were ho-

nest men, and therefore would not assert so much as this without, at least, some appearance of authority for it.

14. As it is evident from what passed at Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, that he himself walked orderly, and kept the law (Acts xxi, 24.) it cannot be supposed that he did not do so at Antioch, and all other places; therefore by *living as do the Gentiles*, which he says Peter had done, cannot be understood his eating of any thing forbidden by the laws of Moses, but some other accommodations, which only the strict Pharisees condemned, such as visiting them. Thus Peter says to Cornelius, Acts x, 28. *Ye know that it is not lawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company with or come unto, one of another nation, tho' there is nothing in the laws of Moses that forbids it.*

16. i. e. Even we who are Jews expect salvation not on account of our observance of any precept peculiar to the laws of Moses, but on principles that are common to all men, and which are now published to the Gentiles in the gospel; knowing that the strictest observance of any mere rites and ceremonies will not avail in the sight of God for the pardon of sin.

17. i. e. If while we profess to be justified, or to approve ourselves to God, on the principles of pure christianity, we add to it such observances as cannot possibly justify us in his sight, but must leave us in a state of condemnation, our christianity will be of no avail to us.

18. i. e. By this conduct I undo all that I have been labouring to do. I was in the way of justification, and
now

now again subject myself to condemnation, by making that necessary to salvation which I cannot fulfil.

19. i. e. By endeavouring to fulfil the law which after all I am unable to do, I subject myself to condemnation and death. But tho' in this respect I may be considered as dead, it has pleased God to give me life by the gospel.

20. i. e. For tho' I may be said to be crucified as Christ was, I live again as he did ; but it is a life not given me by the law, but by the gospel. It is usual with this apostle, who makes great use of figures of speech, to represent himself to have been dead as Christ was, but to have risen again as Christ did, and this he sometimes calls *dying to the law*, that he might not give unnecessary offence to the Jews, by saying that the law was dead to him. There is a good deal of difficulty in the argument of the apostle in this place, but I shall express what I take to be his meaning in the paraphrase.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Four years after my conversion, but fourteen after the promulgation of the gospel, I went again to Jerusalem, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus. This was in consequence of a revelation made to Agabus, concerning a great famine that was approaching, and it was for the relief of the poor christians at Jerusalem in this famine, that we were sent. I then informed the leaders in the church of my having preached the gospel to the Gentiles, without requiring them to conform to the laws of Moses. But that I might not shock
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the prejudices of the more zealous Jews, which would have obstructed my labours with them, I did not speak of it to any others. But at the same time, notwithstanding my unwillingness to give offence, I did not consent to the circumcision of Titus, because he was a Greek, on purpose to assert the liberties of the Gentile christians, and their freedom from the yoke of the law. And tho', on this occasion, I had conferences with the chief of the apostles, and informed them of what I had done, yet I may say, without derogating from their merit, that they did not teach me any thing of which I was ignorant. On the contrary they were satisfied, from the account that I gave them of the success of my preaching, that I was as much an apostle of the uncircumcision, as Peter himself was of the circumcision; and that my ministry had the same seal of the gift of the spirit that theirs had. They, therefore, gave to me and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, advising us to continue our ministry to the Gentiles, while they still confined themselves to that of the Jews. They only urged me to be mindful of the collection for the poor christians in Judea, a work to which I was already sufficiently well inclined.

Not only did I not acknowledge any superiority of Peter to myself; but when he came to Antioch I took the liberty to censure his conduct. For whereas before the arrival of some judaizing teachers, who said they came with instructions from James, he conversed freely with the Gentile christians; he after this withdrew from their society, and for fear of giving offence to these over zealous observers of the law, both he and others,
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and even Barnabas himself, acted this unworthy part. But when I saw that the liberty of the gospel was in danger from this conduct of theirs, I said to Peter in the presence of the whole church, If thou, tho' a Jew, dost not think it necessary to conform to the rules laid down by the Pharisees, why shouldst thou by this conduct enforce the observance of them upon the Gentiles. We who are Jews do not expect to be justified in the sight of God by the observance of any thing peculiar to the laws of Moses. For we well know that nothing of this kind can avail for that purpose. If while we profess christianity, we make the observance of the law to be necessary to salvation, which we are sensible cannot be obtained in this way, we make Christ the occasion of our condemnation, and I shall be guilty of undoing all that I have done in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles without subjecting them to the law.

I consider myself as condemned by the law, and therefore may be said to be dead to it. But in the sight of God I still live. As Christ was crucified and died, I who, like other christians, am conformed to Christ, may be said to have died also; but as he lives again, so do I, or rather, since I live according to the gospel, and by the power of it, it may be said that Christ, who so loved mankind as to submit to die for their benefit, lives in me. The gospel would have been given in vain, and Christ would have died in vain, if notwithstanding this there would have been no justification but through the law.

Ch. III. 1. In order to shew the folly and absurdity of the Galatians having recourse to the law, after professing

selling the gospel, the apostle proceeds to make use of other arguments, as that they had received the gifts of the spirit, and had miracles wrought among them before they had heard of the law ; that Abraham was justified by God before the law was given ; that according to the tenor of the law itself, all who are under it are subject to a curse ; that according to the prophets it is by faith, and not by the works of the law, that men obtain eternal life ; that as Abraham was justified before the giving of the law, and the promise was made to him, and to his seed, it must be extended for those who, like him, were justified without any regard to the law, which was nothing more than an introduction to the gospel, and that by means of this all mankind, without any distinction of Jew or Gentile, become in fact the seed of Abraham, and therefore heirs of the promise made to him.

3. Their having received the gift of the spirit before their judaizing teachers came among them, was a sufficient proof that nothing was wanting to their being accepted of God, and could their conformity to the law be any improvement after this ? On the contrary it was like beginning high, and then sinking low ; beginning in the *spirit*, and ending in the *flesh*, which was always considered as something inferior to it. This opprobrious term the apostle was led to adopt, as being opposite to the *spirit*, by the gifts of which the gospel was confirmed. Having done this, he applies to the law other senses of the term flesh.

4. The Galatians, like other christians, had been
expo-

exposed to persecution; and these sufferings might be considered as of no consequence or avail, if their principles were not then well founded. For it is not mere suffering that entitles a man to any reward, but suffering in a good cause.

9. Great stress seems here to be laid on mere words. The promise of God to Abraham was that his posterity should be a great nation, and was therefore necessarily confined to his proper descendants, the Hebrew nation. That all other nations should be blessed in him, meant that, when prosperity was wished to any other nation, it should be said, may you be as happy and illustrious as the posterity of Abraham; tho' no doubt by their means all other nations will be made happy. The apostle, however, argues justly in saying, that Abraham being justified before the law was given, for his faith in the promises of God, and obedience to his commands, christians may obtain the divine favour by means of their faith and good works, independently of any observance of the law of Moses.

10. According to the Ethiopic version it is, *But this mediator has no concern with one of the parties.* W.

13. The apostle says that they who will abide by the strict terms of the law, which condemns and curses all transgressions, must be subject to the curse, because perfect obedience is impossible; but that Christ became this curse for us when he was crucified; because the law says that every one that is hanged on a tree, or publicly executed, is accursed. But the meaning of the law no doubt was that only wilful and impenitent offenders were subject to any curse. For the placability of God

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to repenting sinners is as fully declared under the law, as under the gospel. At the very time of the giving of the law, the Divine Being solemnly proclaimed himself to Moses, as a *God gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*. When malefactors were executed, they were to be buried before the setting of the sun, because they were considered as a pollution. When it is said that they are accursed of God, the meaning is that they were exceedingly polluted, and for that reason must be put out of the way. For it is added, Deut. xxi. 22, that *the land be not defiled which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance*.

20. Here the apostle opposes the promise which was made to Abraham to the law as given by Moses, since the former was given by God to Abraham in person, whereas the law was given to the Israelites by the hand of Moses, as a mediator between them. They are, therefore, different things, and that which was instituted the last, could not set aside that which preceded it.

21. But the promise made to Abraham, tho' different from the law given by Moses, is not contrary to it. The latter, however, was not sufficient for the purpose of the divine dispensations, because if it had, the gospel would not have been given.

25. The law was intended to prepare men for the gospel, which suits a more advanced age of the world, and therefore this apostle elsewhere calls it a *shadow of good things to come*.

29. The Jews, proud of their descent from Abraham, held all the rest of the world in great contempt: But the apostle magnifies the gospel as setting aside that
injurious

injurious distinction, and bringing all mankind, whatever their previous condition might be, into the same family of God with Abraham himself.

THE PARAPHRASE.

How could you, O Galatians, act so absurdly as to be led by any one to swerve from the plain truth of the gospel, which has been as clearly made known to you, as if Christ had himself lived and been crucified among you. That nothing was wanting to your being perfect christians, was evident from your having received the gifts of the spirit, which was a seal of the truth that was imparted to you while you were only christians, and before you had heard of the law. Having begun so well, by receiving the *spirit*, do you end in a thing so inferior to it as the *flesh*? For so great is the difference between the two systems. Did those persons who preached the gospel to you, and confirmed it by miracles, do it in consequence of their instructing you in the law, or simply by faith in the gospel? Also, for what have you borne the persecution to which you, like other christians, have been exposed, if you were not then in the right faith, and your salvation had not been secure in case of death?

It was on a principle similar to that of the gospel, that Abraham himself, the great ancestor of the Jews, was justified. For it is said of him, that he *believed in God, and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness*. They, therefore, who imitate this faith of Abraham may be said to be his children, and therefore heirs of the promise that was made to him and his posterity. We may even

even say, that the Divine Being, intending that all the heathen world should be received into his favour through faith without the works of the law, announced the same to him, in saying that in *him*, or by acting as he did, *all nations should be blessed*. They, therefore, who have the faith of Abraham, are entitled to a blessing as he was.

On the contrary, they who adhere to the rigid maxims of the law will be so far from receiving a blessing, that they necessarily fall under a *curse*; since it is said, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them*, a condition with which no man can comply. It is also said by the prophet Habakkuk, that *the just shall live by faith*; whereas the law, strictly construed, allows nothing to faith; but insists on perfect obedience.

From this curse, to which all who do not look beyond the law are necessarily exposed, Christ may be said to have delivered us christians, by taking the curse upon himself; since he was crucified, and it is said that he *who is hanged on a tree is cursed*. Thus the blessing of Abraham, which the Jews think to confine to themselves, is imparted to the Gentiles, in consequence of their faith in Christ, by which they receive the gifts of the spirit.

Attend now to another consideration. When any covenant is made, the terms of it must be strictly adhered to. Now the promise was made to Abraham and *his seed*, and since this seed is *one*, and not *many*, it belongs exclusively to those who are his children, as imitators of his faith, by believing in Christ, and obey-
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ing his gospel. And this covenant being made four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law, this event could not set it aside ; but if none are entitled to this promise but through the law, the former promise would be of no effect.

You will ask me of what use is the law. I answer, it was appointed to be a check to transgressors till the time should come that the true children of Abraham should claim this promise. This law was given through a mediator, viz. Moses. Consequently in the giving of the law two parties were concerned, as is necessarily the case when a mediator is appointed ; but when God made the promise to Abraham, no person was interposed between them.

Do not, however, suppose that when I make the law to be a thing distinct from the promise of God to Abraham, I make it to be contrary to it. I only say that if the law had been sufficient for the purpose of the divine dispensations, nothing farther could have been done. But since according to the scripture, all mankind are guilty before God, and therefore cannot be justified on the strict terms of the law, they must have recourse to the promise of God renewed by Jesus Christ in the preaching of the gospel ; and the promulgation of the law served as a preparation for it. To use a figure of speech, the law may be said to have been a schoolmaster to train us up while we were in a state of childhood, for something more perfect when we should be men. But being arrived at this state, the law is no farther of that use. As christians only, we are the children of God. By being baptized, we may be said to have put on

VOL. IV. E Christ,

Christ, appearing in the eyes of God as Christ himself. All, therefore, being equally christians, there is no material difference between Jews and Gentiles, slaves or masters, males or females; all christians being also the true children of Abraham, and therefore heirs of the promise that was made to him.

Ch. IV. The apostle still urges the same argument to shew the inferiority of the law to the gospel. He also appeals to their feeling, and the affection they had professed for him; and he expostulates with the Galatians on their desertion of him, to listen to others who had much less merit with respect to them than he had.

5. The apostle having represented the law as a school-master, to train us up for something farther, here considers those who are in that state of tuition, or guardianship, as little more than *servants*, being in a state of obedience to others; and Christ, as coming to emancipate us from that degraded situation, to give us the privileges of *sons*, who are grown to man's estate, a state of liberty and honour. He says that Christ having been under the law himself, he delivers us from that state of servitude. But in what manner, or on what principle, this emancipation was effected, or how his having been under the law himself contributes to that end, he does not say. But as, in the former part of the epistle, he had said that we cease to be under the curse in consequence of Christ having been subject to it for us, the same idea is continued, tho' not with the same clearness. A person may exempt another from any penalty, or punishment, by putting himself in his place; but a person

person becoming a disciple under a master has no tendency to free others from that situation. Nothing can with propriety effect this but their attainment of that knowledge, or those qualifications, to acquire which they were sent to the school. A person may pay a debt, or suffer a punishment, for another; but he cannot acquire knowledge for him. Paul's idea of a schoolmaster in this case was perhaps nothing more than that of a *master* in general, who would give freedom to one of his slaves, when he had another in his place.

6. That christians are the genuine sons of God, the apostle proves by their having the spirit, or dispositions, of his sons, which they shew by addressing him as their father, which slaves could not do.

7. If christians be sons, they are intitled to a competent provision from their parent.

9. The falling of the Galatians into a state of bondage under the law was aggravated by the consideration of the low state from which they were rescued by the gospel, viz. a state of heathen idolatry, or the service of false gods: From this they had been made not only the servants, but the sons of God; and yet after this went, in some measure, back again; not indeed to the condition of servants to false gods, but an inferior state with respect to the true one.

10. The Jewish festivals and other observances, depended upon the seasons of the year.

12. The last clause is not noticed by the Ethiopic translator, M. W. conjectures it should be, *do me not so much injury*, i. e. as to make all my labour fruitless, the alteration from the present reading being slight. W.

16. The conduct of the Galatian christians with respect to Paul, was the more extraordinary, and reprehensible, from the consideration of the uncommon affection they had entertained for him, when they would have cheerfully made any sacrifice for his sake ; whereas tho' he continued the same with respect to them, and retained the same affection for them, they were become alienated from him.

17. The apostle intimates that the new teachers courted their favour, and wished to exclude him from it, to answer their own ends, not from any love they had for them.

18. If your former zeal and affection for me was reasonable, it ought to continue the same, and my presence with you, or my absence from you, ought not to make any difference with respect to it.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Allow me to make use of another comparison, to shew you how inferior are those who are under the law to those who adhere to the pure gospel. I have said that the law may be considered in the light of a schoolmaster, or tutor to prepare men for the gospel. Now the situation of a young person under the care of a tutor, or governor, is not very different from that of a servant, tho' he be heir to the estate. Therefore before the promulgation of the gospel through Christ we were only to be considered as children, learning elementary principles, and in subjection to a master. But in due time it pleased God by means of Jesus, who was a man born under

under the law, to deliver us from that state of bondage, in order, as it were, to complete our education; and at the same time raise us to all the privileges of sons who are emancipated from their tutors, and give us a higher rank in the family. And that we are the sons of God is evident from our behaving like sons, in addressing ourselves to God as our father. We now therefore, as christians, are no more to be considered as servants, but as sons; and if sons, as heirs of God, destined to a noble inheritance along with Christ himself.

Having, therefore, attained to this freedom of sons in the family, why should you wish to return to a state of bondage, and as it were go to school again. Your superstitious observance of days and times makes me fear that my labours among you have been to little purpose. Let me then intreat you to return to the principles which you received from me. Let us be one in sentiment and affection, in which I have not been deficient with respect to you. For I do not desire to have an advantage over you, but that in all respects we be one. All that I desire is for your honour and advantage not my own. For your present dispositions and conduct is no injury, or discredit, to me, but only to yourselves.

Your affection for me when I first came among you was, indeed, exceedingly great, notwithstanding such infirmities as might have prejudiced you against me. Nevertheless, such was your sense of the value of my instructions, that if I had been an angel from heaven you could not have received me with more respect; nor was there any sacrifice that you would not have made to

me. You then thought yourselves happy that I came among you. But where is this attachment now? Are you alienated from me because I teach you what is true? Your present teachers express a great regard for you, but their object is only to lessen me in your esteem, and for their own advantage to gain the place that I possessed in your affections. But if I ever was deserving of your regard, I still am so; and as much now that I am absent from you, as I was when I was present with you.

The apostle after expressing his extreme concern for the defection of the Galatians from the genuine principles of the gospel to those of the law, directs their attention to some things that they might learn from the books of the law, in which they might see, in a figure, the different conditions of those that were under the law and those under the gospel.

19. The apostle, having represented himself as the parent of these Galatians, here intimates that, being relapsed into another state, they have occasion for another birth, so imperfect were they become.

22. There is so great boldness in the apostle's allegorizing of the history of Sarah and Hagar, that it cannot be supposed that he really thought that it was originally intended to be applied as he does it. But he made choice of this portion of scripture in order to express his own idea of the different states of the judaizing christians, and the gentile converts, the former as in a state of bondage, and the latter as free; so much so, that they might be considered as the children of Sarah
who

who was a free woman, and the others as those of Hagar who was a slave.

26. As the Jews were in possession of the earthly Jerusalem, he represented the christians as possessed of another Jerusalem in heaven, and therefore superior to the former.

27. In the passage of Isaiah here quoted, the prophet describes the great number of Jews who should inherit the promised land on their return to it after their present long dispersion; but the apostle applies it to the greater number of christian converts, especially from the Gentiles.

29. In this the apostle refers to the vexation that was given to Sarah by Hagar, in consequence of which the latter was sent out of the family, while Sarah and her child remained in it.

THE PARAPHRASE.

My christian converts, give me leave to consider you as my children, and observe that you have departed so far from the principles which you have received from me, that you have occasion for a second birth. I have been wishing to be with you, and to address you in a manner that I have not hitherto done, from my anxiety about you. As you wish to be under the law, I will give you a lesson from the book of the law. You have heard that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, the former by a slave, and the latter by a free woman. In the birth of the former there was nothing extraordinary, but the latter was by a miracle, in consequence of

a particular promise of God for that purpose, and is therefore to be considered in a superior light. Now of this history we may make an allegory, or an interpretation different from the literal one, and suppose these two sons [to represent two covenants, the one delivered from mount Sinai, the parties concerned in which, like Hagar, who was a slave, are in a state of bondage. For this Hagar may denote mount Sinai in Arabia, and correspond to the present Jerusalem, which is in servitude together with its inhabitants; whereas our mother is another Jerusalem, which is from above, and is free, together with its inhabitants. It is of this Jerusalem that the prophet Isaiah may be supposed to say, *Rejoice O barren that barest not, break forth, and cry, thou that travailest not; for she that was desolate has many more children than she that had a husband; that is the Gentile converts shall be more numerous than the Jews.* Now we Gentile christians (for I class myself with you) are represented by Isaac and are therefore the children of the promise; and as in the history he who was born in the natural course of generation, or after the flesh, used to vex him that was born after the spirit, or in consequence of the promise, so it is now; the judaizing christians giving much disturbance to the Gentile converts. But what says the scripture for our consolation? Send away the slave and her son, for the son of the slave shall not be heir together with the son of the free woman. They who adhere to the law will be rejected, and the preference will be given to those who are emancipated from it; and we are not represented by the child,

child of Hagar the slave, but by Isaac the son of the free woman.

Ch. V. 1. The apostle exhorting the Galatian christians to maintain their liberty, forewarns them that, in submitting to the yoke of the law, they in effect abandoned the gospel. He then laments that a few judaizing teachers should have influenced so many of them; and as it had been reported that he himself had preached obedience to the law to Gentile converts in other places, tho' not in Galatia, he denies the charge, and shews from his sufferings that it could not be true.

4. That is, you will make yourselves mere Jewish profelytes, undervaluing the gospel, and the privileges of it. This, however, is to be understood of the Gentile christians only. For the apostles themselves, being Jews, were under obligations to observe all the laws of Moses, and strictly did so, as did all the Jewish christians after them; and certainly this apostle would not have said that they were no better for their profession of christianity.

6. It is the excellence of christianity, that it is adapted to all mankind, however they may differ with respect to their origin, forms of government, or their condition of any kind here. Whereas the institutions of Moses, tho' of divine appointment, respected the Jews only. Thus Peter said to Cornelius, *God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.*

8. 'Tis, I, who converted you to the faith of Christ, did not teach you. It has been an enemy who has sowed tares in my absence.

9 These

9. These principles have been insinuated by a few persons, or perhaps a single person, tho' numbers have been infected by them.

11. It had probably been said that Paul, as he conformed to the law himself, had enjoined the observance of it on his Gentile converts in other places, tho' not in Galatia. This he denies.

12. That is, expelled from christian churches. He did not wish them any greater evil; and this only for the sake of others, who were liable to be influenced by them to their hurt.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Being, as I have represented, in a state of freedom, as christians, let me entreat you not to submit to a yoke of bondage, without considering the necessary consequence of it. If you, being Gentiles, become circumcised, like other Jewish converts, you bring yourselves under an obligation to conform to the whole law, and must, like the native Jews, expect justification from your observance of it, and not from that free grace which is preached in the gospel. We do not expect salvation from the law, but only from our faith in the gospel, and in obedience to it; a dispensation which was confirmed by the gifts of the spirit. For, according to the true principles of christianity, circumcision is of no more avail than uncircumcision, but only that faith in the promises of God which produces love and obedience.

You Galatians made a good beginning, why did you
not

not proceed in the same manner, and hold to the pure truth? This must have come from the persuasion of others, and not from me who called you to the knowledge of the gospel. But in you is verified the proverb which says, *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*. Your judaizing teachers tho' few in number have infected many of you. But notwithstanding present appearances, I am persuaded you will on reflection revert to your former better sentiments and conduct, and that the persons who have been the cause of your disaffection will suffer for it. If you have heard that I myself preach conformity to the law to any of my Gentile converts, you have been misinformed. If I did, I should not have been exposed as I have been, and yet am, to the persecution of these judaizers. So much mischief has been done in christian churches by the judaizers, that I cannot help wishing that you had no connection with them, but that they were expelled from all the christian societies,

- Having represented the gospel as a dispensation of *liberty*, the apostle here cautions the Galatians against the abuse of it, and to consider themselves as under the strongest obligation to the practice of all virtue

13. This is an excellent caution against the abuse of the liberty, which he had exhorted them to assert.

- 16. Here the apostle passes from one sense of a word to another, which, tho' shewing ingenuity, is in danger of misleading the reader. He had before characterized the gospel by the appellation of the *spirit*, and the law by that of the *flesh*, as an inferior dispensation. From this

this he now takes occasion to exhort his readers to avoid what is commonly called *the lusts of the flesh*, or the vices to which men are subject. These he enumerates, and among them such as were apt to occasion divisions in churches, and the animosity consequent upon them.

23. In opposition to those vices which he ascribes to the principle of *flesh*, he strongly recommends the opposite virtues which he refers to the *spirit*, or the genuine fruits of the gospel.

24. Here we have another figure of speech, which approaches to a play upon words, so frequent with this apostle. In imitation of Christ being crucified, he sometimes represents christians as crucified, dead, and buried, with him, and also as rising again with him. Here he represents not himself, but his fias, as crucified with Christ.

25. That is, if we make profession of a religion which was confirmed by the spirit of God, let us live according to the principles of it. But in this the apostle uses the term *spirit* in two different senses.

26. Here he alludes to the state of the Galatian churches distracted with their divisions, and the animosities arising from them.

THE PARAPHRASE.

My brethren, tho' you have been called to liberty, remember, that it is only a freedom from an obligation to the Jewish ceremonial law, and not from the practice of virtue. Do not then abuse it, but consider yourselves as servants

servants to one another, and with the greatest good will, whenever it is in your power, do to one another every kind office. This is agreeable to the tenor of the law itself, which you so much affect. For all the moral and most valuable part of it is comprehended in this one precept, *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Take care then lest, by your divisions and mutual animosity, you do not act the reverse of this precept, and so far from befriending, injure one another.

I have compared the gospel to the *spirit*, in opposition to the law, which, as an inferior principle, I termed the *flesh*. See then that you live according to the spirit, and avoid what are usually called the sins of the flesh, or the vices that men in this life are subject to. For there are in every man two opposite principles, one of good, and the other of evil, which may be denominated the *spirit* and the *flesh*. From this opposition of contrary inclinations, (to make myself an example of what I wish to enforce) I cannot always do that which I most approve. If you live according to this spirit, you will not be subject to the condemning power of the law. The works of the flesh, which are opposite to those of the spirit, are well known, viz. such as adultery, fornication, and other vices, against which I have frequently warned you, assuring you that they who are addicted to them, cannot obtain the kingdom of God promised in the gospel. On the contrary, the fruits of the spirit, by which I exhort you to act, are the opposite virtues, love, peaceableness, &c. which if you practise, the law will never hurt you. But if you be real christians, you are free from all the above mentioned vices.

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vices. For as Christ was crucified, we also may be said to have crucified our lusts and vices. If then we pretend to be christians, and to have the spirit of God, let us have all the genuine fruits of the spirit, and especially be on our guard against that ambition, which is so conspicuous in your judaizing teachers, and which leads to envy and every evil work.

Ch. VI. 1. The apostle concludes his epistle with moral instructions of a miscellaneous nature, and after this reverts to his exhortations about judaizing.

1. Let those who boast of their spiritual attainments, or their having the gifts of the spirit, exert themselves the most in their endeavours to reclaim the vicious, and in every other respect to do kind offices to their brethren.

3. Here he alludes to the judaizing teachers, who undervalued him, and boasted of their superior knowledge.

4. That is, let every person consider how far his conduct is right in itself, and not how much it is better than that of others.

8. The apostle makes use of the terms *corruption* and *life* in a correspondence to the nature of those principles of flesh and spirit, the flesh being liable to corruption, and spirit, or breath, being the principle, or life.

11. It was not usual with the apostle to write whole epistles with his own hand, but only to sign them. Perhaps, being a Jew, he did not write the Greek character well. But it is more truly rendered *with what large or awkward letters I have written*, not being used to write the Greek character.

12. He here again reverts to the conduct of the Judaizing teachers, apprizing the Galatians of the true motives of their conduct in preaching the observance of the law. By this means they were thought more favourably of by the zealous Jews, who were at that time the only persecutors of the christians.

17. Let no person undervalue me, as if I was not an apostle. For my persecutions are a sufficient evidence of this.

18. The phrase *with your spirit*, is equivalent to *with you*, which is more usual with this apostle in the same connection; as he generally concludes his epistles with *Grace be with you all*.

THE PARAPHRASE.

If any member of your church be guilty of any offence, let those who are most distinguished for their spiritual gifts, and of course have the greatest influence, admonish, and restore him, but without harshness, considering that they themselves are not exempt from failings. In all respects feel for, and do all kind offices to one another; for this was particularly enjoined by Christ on all his disciples, when he said, *by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another*.

If any man think more highly of himself than he ought to do, he deceiveth himself. But in order to judge rightly of our dispositions and conduct, we must not be content with comparing ourselves with others, whom we may think our inferiors, but examine ourselves

selves by the standard of truth and right ; our conformity to which is the only solid ground of self approbation. For at the last day every man will be judged in this manner.

Such is the duty of your teachers. Let those who are instructed by them minister to their wants, giving temporal things for spiritual ones. But, above all things, give the strictest attention to your moral conduct. For however men may deceive themselves, or others, God is not to be imposed upon ; and according to men's conduct here will they be rewarded, or punished, hereafter. They who indulge, in the lusts of the flesh must expect that corruption to which flesh is subject ; but they who live according to the precepts of the gospel, which was confirmed by the Holy Spirit, shall inherit that eternal life which the gospel promises. But we must persevere in well doing if we expect any future reward. Let us then take every opportunity of shewing our good will to all men, but especially to our christian brethren.

Before I conclude this epistle, which is wholly written with my own hand, and sadly written, I must again observe, that your haughty Jewish teachers are desirous of having you circumcised, lest they should be exposed to persecution from the more zealous Jews, who are all the enemies we now have. But, notwithstanding their zeal for the law, they are far from strictly observing it, but wish to have the credit of making you proselytes to their opinions. Such is not the foundation of my boasting. I glory in that very circumstance which exposes our religion to the contempt of the

world, the doctrine of a crucified Saviour. By this, to resume my former allusion, the world is crucified to me, and I to the world, my happiness being wholly independent of it, or of the opinion the world may entertain of me, or my doctrine. According to the great maxim of the gospel, nothing external to a man, no consideration of his being circumcised, or uncircumcised, will avail him at all in the sight of God, but only a change of heart and life. To those who hold with me in this opinion I pray that God may grant all happiness, together with all who, in the true and proper sense, are the sons of Abraham. But do not from this time listen to any objections to me, your father in Christ. That I am a true apostle is evidenced, if by nothing else, by the persecutions to which I am continually exposed on that account. May you have all the blessings of the gospel.

NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

AFTER Paul had written his epistle to the Galatians, which was from Corinth A. D. 52, where he had continued two years in his second apostolical journey, he returned to Jerusalem by way of Ephesus; and thence he went to Antioch, where he stayed about

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a year. From this city he set out on his third journey, when, after passing through Galatia and Phrygia, he went again to Ephesus, and from this place about A. D. 56, he wrote this first epistle to the church at Corinth.

It was occasioned by messengers sent to him from that city, proposing to him a variety of questions, on which the members of the church were much divided. In Corinth also, as well as in Galatia, attempts had been made to lessen the authority of Paul, where some persons distinguished by their eloquence, and boasting of their knowledge, had taught that the christian resurrection was not a literal rising from the dead, but either a change of life and conduct, or the release of the soul from its confinement in the body. These persons, evidently held the Gnostic opinions; and this is the first time that we meet with the mention of them among christians. For the philosophers of that age; believing in the inherent evil nature of matter, thought that the soul would be most completely happy when it was released from its fleshy incumbrance.

On this Paul, in this epistle, asserts at large the reality of a proper resurrection, like that of Jesus Christ, on which the whole of the christian scheme depended; assuring the Corinthians that that which was committed to the grave would rise again; but much changed in its nature and properties, from mortal to immortal, from earthly to heavenly.

The apostle's address to the christians at Corinth, shews that many of the first converts to christianity were not immediately reformed by it, but continued addicted to the sensual gratifications in which they had
... without

without restraint indulged before, and that it was not without difficulty that they were brought off from them: Indeed, we may easily believe that many persons of good sense, candour, and competent judges of evidence, but whose moral characters were far from being irreproachable, might be convinced of the truth of christianity, a considerable time before the principles of it effected a thorough reformation of their conduct.

In this epistle Paul asserts his apostolical authority, and endeavours to make his Corinthian converts think less highly of the boasted eloquence of their new teachers, who seem, like the philosophers and rhetoricians of those times, to have received money for their harangues. He therefore, shews the difference between his conduct and theirs in that respect.

Corinth was one of the most populous cities of Greece. Many of its inhabitants were rich and luxurious, and, like the Greeks in general, were much captivated with the charms of eloquence, with which they were entertained by their public speakers and philosophers. Many of them, even after their conversion to christianity, entertained but a low opinion of the apostle, on account of his mean personal appearance, and the plainness of his address. Of these circumstances the Gnostic teachers took advantage, and to this the apostle adverts in the beginning of his epistle.

Ch. I. 1. Sothenes was of Corinth.

2. This ought to have been rendered, *who call themselves by the name of Christ*, that is, who are christians.

7. Here the apostle, with much address, praises the Corinthians as far as he justly could ; having many disagreeable truths to tell them afterwards.

10 The church of Corinth was long noted for the factions and divisions that prevailed in it, as we find by the epistle of Clement, bishop of Rome, some time after the age of the apostles.

12. The difference with respect to the persons by whom they had been converted was of little consequence, but with those who are previously disposed to difference, a small circumstance would suffice. From what the apostle here says, it appears that, tho' the generality of the Corinthian christians were converted by himself, some of them had resided in Judea, and been the disciples of Christ himself.

13. It is something remarkable, and greatly in favour of the evidences of christianity, that none of the disciples of Christ endeavoured to supplant him. They all acted in subordination to a crucified master, how much soever they were opposed to each other ; and there was no want of emulation among them. In this they were all united, acknowledging one master, even Christ. This was not the case with respect to Mahometanism. Several persons set up on his plan, and in opposition to him. With respect to Christ, this was never attempted, nor could it possibly have succeeded, if the attempt had been made.

17. The mere administration of baptism was in its nature, a servile and inferior work. Jesus himself did not baptise, but only his disciples. For as baptism was then



then administered, the person who baptized went into the water along with the new convert, and plunged him over head.

18. Nothing staggered the world more than the promulgation of a new religion under the name of a *crucified founder*. To make it credible, required the strongest evidence ; and nothing short of this could have enabled it to make its way. But no circumstance shews the wisdom of providence with respect to future ages more than this, at which the minds of men revolted so much at the time ; since it is now most evident, that the gospel did not owe its establishment to any thing specious in itself, any more than to the aid of learning or power. The apostles had nothing but plain and most improbable things to relate, and they were not able to set off their plain story in any manner that was adapted to captivate their hearers. We may be certain, therefore, that its external evidence must have been irresistible to those who gave due attention to it.

22. That is the *sign from heaven* so often mentioned in the history of Jesus.

29. This state of things, and the pious sentiments suggested by the consideration of it, we see in the address of Jesus. Matt. xi, 25. *Father I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

30. True wisdom appears in the plan and in the promulgation of the gospel and it is excellently calculated to promote the virtue and final happiness of man.

NOTES ON THE PARAPHRASE.

I Paul, appointed by the favour of almighty God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, now joined by our brother Sosthenes, address this epistle to you who are christians at Corinth, separated from the heathen world by the profession of a holy religion, and to all who are called by the christian name in your neighbourhood ; all of you professing obedience to the same Lord Jesus Christ. May you enjoy all the blessings of the gospel.

I am truly thankful to God for your happiness in this respect, and that, besides the advantages common to all christians, many of you are distinguished by superior knowledge and eloquence, as by this means the truth of christianity will be more fully displayed. Thus endued, you are deficient in nothing, and only wait for the coming of Jesus Christ. And as I do not doubt your perseverance, I am persuaded that you will appear with advantage at that great and glorious day. Having done your part, you will not doubt but that God, by whose spirit and power you have been confirmed in the faith of Christ, will perform all that has been promised by him.

Let me intreat you, brethren, since you all agree in the profession of christianity, and your subjection to one common Lord and master, to be perfectly united among yourselves ; and do not keep up those divisions, and that animosity against one another, which I have been informed subsist among you. For some of you, I hear, profess a particular attachment to myself, others to Apollos, others to Peter, and others to Christ only. But what foundation is there for any division of christians on
this

this account? Do any of us set up in opposition to Christ? Was I crucified for you, as he was, or were any of you baptized in my name? I rejoice that, since this unhappy division has taken place, I did not myself baptize any of you, except Crispus, Gaius, and the family of Stephanas, so that there cannot be any pretence for saying that I baptized in my own name, with a view to make disciples to myself.

Indeed, my commission was not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; and in doing this I do not endeavour to appear what you call eloquent. For then my preaching would have had less real effect. Tho' this plan of preaching is deemed foolish by those who reject it, to those who receive it, it appears to be such as God himself gives his sanction to. As we read *Is. xxix, 14. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.* This is fully exemplified in the present state of things. For what has been effected by your philosophers and orators? Compared with the gospel all their discourses are mere folly. But when by the greatest efforts of their wisdom they did not attain to the true knowledge of God, but continued addicted to the most absurd idolatry, it pleased the Divine Being to effect this happy and wonderful change, to bring great numbers to the knowledge of the most salutary truth, by that preaching which they despise.

The Jews and the Gentiles have different reasons for rejecting the gospel. The Jews still call for their *sign from heaven*, supposing that the Messiah must make his appearance in that character by descending from

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the clouds, and the Greeks cannot relish any thing that is not recommended by their much admired eloquence ; whereas, I lay before them nothing but a plain narrative of facts, such as an authentic account of the doctrine, the miracles, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At the death of the Messiah the Jews are shocked, as a catastrophe unworthy of him ; and as to the doctrine of the resurrection, the learned Greeks, like those at Athens, think it so incredible that they will not attend to any evidence in its favour. But to those who understand, and therefore embrace, the gospel, this very measure of Christ dying and rising again displays the wisdom as well as the power of God in the most conspicuous manner ; since nothing could have been so well calculated to convince the reasonable part of mankind of the certainty of a future state. And in this we see the great superiority of divine wisdom to that of man.

The effect of these prejudices is visible in the small number of those who are learned, or in any way eminent, among you who are converts to christianity. But this very circumstance will ultimately be a farther display of the wisdom of God, in providing in the best manner for the credibility of the gospel in future ages, when it will be apparent, that its promulgation had no advantage from the wisdom or power of man ; but that it established itself by its own evidence, under every possible disadvantage ; so that there is no room for man to boast with respect to it. To this divine wisdom and goodness are you indebted for all the blessings of the gospel. In this scheme we see perfect wisdom, and the best provision for the virtue and happiness of men. We may,

CH. II. I. CORINTHIANS:

may, therefore adopt the language of the prophet Jeremiah, Ch. xxiii. 4. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.*

Ch. II. The apostle enlarges in praise of the wisdom of the gospel dispensation, and the propriety of his method of preaching, in opposition to the more admired declamatory manner of the Grecian sophists.

1. The Syriac and Coptic versions have *mystery*, instead of *testimony*. W.

8. The apostle seems to have laboured under some bodily infirmity, with which he says he was afflicted after his vision in the temple, and which he called *a thorn in the flesh, the instrument of Satan to buffet him*.

7. The design of God in favour of the gentile world, till the time of the promulgation of the gospel was come, is called a *mystery*, or *secret*, because it was unknown; but when it was made known, it was no longer a mystery.

9. Had the Jews, or the Romans, known the real character of Jesus Christ, his true relation to God, and to mankind, they certainly would not have acted towards him as they did.

10. Here, by a figure of speech, the spirit of God is represented as a person distinct from God, whose spirit it was; and yet immediately afterwards, it is spoken of as the same with God, just as the spirit of a man, is nothing different from the man.

11. This may be rendered *speaking spiritual things to spiritual men*.

12. That is, it is not from any human wisdom that we acquire a knowledge of the gospel. The truths of it could

could only be imparted by God, and they are his free gift to man.

13. Both the doctrine I teach, and my manner of teaching it, differ from any thing that men would naturally choose, but they are agreeable to the scriptures, in which God formerly made known his will to man.

14. The truths of the gospel appear foolishness to most men, nor can they be perfectly known but by those who are taught of God, in seeing them confirmed by the gifts of the spirit.

15. By the *spiritual man* is meant the christian. He knows the value of gospel truth, and is not influenced by the opinions of other men. He is taught of God, with whom is the perfection of wisdom.

16. By the apostle's saying that he *had the mind of Christ*, he probably meant that he had his instructions from Christ himself, and therefore that his teaching, however despised by some, was superior to that of those who undervalued him, and endeavoured to supplant him in their esteem.

THE PARAPHRASE:

When I came to preach the gospel among you, I did not affect any thing of that eloquence which you so much admire, but contented myself with informing you in the plainest terms of the history of Jesus, what he taught, what miracles he wrought, how he was crucified, and how God raised him from the dead, in attestation of his divine mission. Neither was there any thing to strike you with respect, but rather with contempt, in
my

my person or manner. Instead of endeavouring to captivate you with the arts of an orator, my doctrine was confirmed by miracles, and by the gifts of the spirit. In consequence of which your belief of the gospel did not stand on a foundation so precarious as the ability of a preacher, but on the power of God.

Not that our preaching is destitute of wisdom to those who truly understand it, tho' it be not such as is generally admired by persons of your nation. For we announce to you such sublime truths as were wholly unknown to the world, and which God did not reveal till he honoured us with the promulgation of them. For had the princes of this world understood the gracious purposes of God in the mission of Jesus, they certainly would not have put to death so excellent a person.

Of such value is the subject of our preaching, that we may apply to it the language of the prophet Isaiah, Ch. Lxiv, 4. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God has revealed to them that love him.* But by imparting the gift of his spirit he has revealed them to us, and given us a commission to make them known to the world; and they are truths that man could never have discovered of himself; as before this revelation they were known to God only. For as the purposes of man can only be known to the spirit of man, or the man himself, so the designs of God are known only to his spirit. But what we could not have acquired by any human means has been freely imparted to us by God; and our communication of them to others, is in a manner suitable to their dignity and importance; not with human

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human eloquence, but in such language as the Divine Being himself has thought proper to use in the scriptures, which were dictated by him, and which we explain by comparing one part of these scriptures with another.

Tho' both the subject of our preaching, and the manner in which we communicate it, appear contemptible to your learned philosophers, none can attain to this knowledge but by attending to what the Divine Being has revealed. Those, however, who in consequence of embracing christianity, really understand the principles of it, are convinced of their wisdom, and are not moved by the rash censures of those who are ignorant of them, how knowing soever in other respects. To censure our preaching is, in effect, to arraign the wisdom of God; and who can pretend to be wiser than he? But as I have been instructed by Christ himself, I am qualified to communicate this knowledge to you.

Ch. III. In this part of the epistle the apostle reproves the Corinthians on account of their divisions, and represents this circumstance as an evidence that they were not so far advanced in the knowledge of christianity as their teachers boasted.

1. This, and what immediately follows is by way of reproof for the opinion they entertained of the superior knowledge of their new teachers.

3. A proof that they were in a low and carnal state, the reverse of the highly advanced and spiritual one, was the low passions by which they were actuated, evidenced by their scandalous divisions..

5. In this reproof of the arrogance of others, Paul is far from magnifying himself; and with great candour and judgment he represents himself, and all who with him laboured in the propagation of the gospel, as equally instruments in the hand of God.

8. That is, have one object.

9. This is a sublime idea, and should inspire all who labour in the propagation of the gospel with zeal and courage. It is a work which God himself has undertaken, and we are acting under and together with him. Here are two different images under which the apostle represents his labours. The first is that of a *harvest*, which was frequently used by our Saviour; the second that of a *building* the foundation of which he had laid, being the first who had preached the gospel at Corinth, and on this other persons were building. This image he pursues farther.

12. Under this image he describes the different kinds of materials with which it is possible to raise a building; but the time will come when, how specious soever they may appear, their durability will be tried; and as fire consumes wood and stubble, but not the more valuable materials that he mentions, he makes use of this figure to represent either the persecutions to which christians would be exposed, or the judgment which would be passed on every man's work at the last day.

15. He does not say that the workman himself would be destroyed, but only his work. For if his intentions were good, how injudicious soever his conduct might have been, he would escape condemnation, but his motives being liable to suspicion, it would resemble the escape

escape of a man from a fire, which would destroy the building in which he resided.

16. Having called a christian church a *building* he now farther calls it a *temple*; and being a temple of God, he exhorts the Corinthians to keep it pure, especially from such pride and arrogance on account of their supposed superior knowledge, as the Corinthian christians were chargeable with.

23. Tho' the apostle censures with great severity some members of this church, he is careful not to include the great body of them. On the contrary he represents them, considered as the temple of God, in the most respectable light; their teachers being subservient to them, and all things, and all events, calculated for their edification. With great propriety and sublimity he pursues the allusion, and after saying that all things were theirs, he says they were Christ's, and Christ himself was God's all being subservient to his great designs; Christ being the servant of God, and all christians the servants of Christ.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Many of you, instructed by your new teachers, boast of your superior knowledge, as if your attainments might be denominated *spiritual*, while ours are *carnal*; but hitherto I have seen no evidence of this. On the contrary, I have found it necessary to address you as children in christian knowledge, and to give you the simplest food; because hitherto ye have not been able to bear any other.

That

That you are in a low and carnal state, is evident from your divisions, and the jealousy and animosity which arises from them. This alone is a proof of your not being advanced beyond the attainments of ordinary men. How otherwise could you lay any stress on your having been converted by myself, by Apollós, or by any other teacher. For we are only servants, dispensing the things with which we have been intrusted. Thus I may be said to have planted christianity among you, and Apollos to have watered the plant, but, as in the natural world, it is God who causes the plant to grow. I who plant, and he who waters, are both employed in the same work, and we shall receive a reward in proportion to our labour. The work itself is God's and we are labourers under and together with him, while you, as part of the christian church, may be said to be the *harvest* in which we labour; or, to adopt another figure of speech, the *building* which we are erecting. With respect to you I have laid the foundation, in pursuance of the commission which I received for that purpose, and those who came after me are building upon it. But let every person take care how, and what, he builds upon it.

The foundation itself cannot be changed. That is the simple doctrine of the gospel, and the superstructure ought to be suitable to it. When the foundation of any other building is laid, men may build upon it with very different materials, some durable ones, as gold, silver, and precious stones; and other perishable, as wood and straw. But hereafter tho' not immediately, it will appear with respect to christianity what those materials have

have been. For the day of trial is approaching, and this will be as by a fire. If the materials stand this test, the builder will be approved and rewarded. If they be consumed, he will lose his labour; but if his intentions were good, he will not suffer in his own person, tho' he will escape with some difficulty, as men do from a building that is on fire.

Consider, then, yourselves in this honourable light, as a building or temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in it; and therefore be careful to preserve it pure and holy, for if any person defile a temple of God, he must expect to suffer from the divine displeasure. Let me more especially caution you against pride and self conceit. Let those among you who boast the most of their superior knowledge, condescend to learn again the first elements of divine knowledge, as the only way to obtain true wisdom. For all your boasted philosophy is but folly in the eye of God. To this case we may apply the following passage of the book of Job, Ch. v. 13, *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain.* No longer then boast of your eloquent teachers. All things are subservient to your edification. I myself, or Apollos, say every thing that bears any relation to you, life or death, things present or things to come, all are employed in the course of divine providence for the same purpose. And as we may be said to be your servants, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's servant.

Ch. IV. The apostle continues to give a just idea of his situation, and that of other preachers of the gospel,

as the servants of Christ, and not without irony, he exposes the folly of their proud teachers; intimating his intention of visiting them, and putting their boasted superiority to the proof.

4. Tho' I am not conscious of any thing blameworthy, I may lie under a prejudice, which will prevent my perceiving it. On this account most persons think better of themselves than the truth will allow.

6. That no person may pride himself in one teacher against another. W.

That is I have spoken of myself, and of Apollos, as having discharged a certain duty with respect to the preaching of the gospel; but the observation is of universal application. If we be only servants, ministers to the good of others, the same are your philosophizing teachers. They are not to be regarded in any higher light.

8. In this the apostle speaks ironically, as if they really were what they affected to be.

9. It was the custom with the Romans, in exhibiting shews of gladiators, to produce in the last place some who were to fight till one of the parties were actually killed.

13. The apostle by describing his own situation, and that of other apostles, as exposed to every kind of ill usage, which yet they were obliged to bear with the greatest meekness, reproves the arrogance of the philosophizing teachers, who gained both applause and profit by their lectures. The terms he makes use of, and which in our translation are rendered *sith* and *offscouring*, denote in the original, some of the meanest and most

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despicable, which were kept in cities in order to be sacrificed, when, after any great calamity, they required the rites of purgation, and as they went to be put to death were loaded with all kinds of curses and execrations, as if all the guilt of the city was transferred to them. No terms in the Greek language were so reproachful.

13. These words may be rendered *filth and refusal in general*.

15. Here the apostle appeals to their affections, in which he once had a place, and to which he had the best founded claim, as their spiritual father, having been the first to preach the gospel to them.

21. Notwithstanding the great meekness of the apostle, he could on proper occasions act with spirit, so as to repress the arrogance of those who assumed more than belonged to them. He shewed that he was far from wishing to decline an interview with those who affected to despise him.

THE PARAPHRASE.

In order to form a just opinion of us who are apostles it must be considered that we are the servants of Christ, and stewards with respect to the truths of the gospel, which we are to communicate to others, and that the chief recommendation of a steward is fidelity to the trust committed to him. But I make little account of any opinion that your teachers, or any other men, may form of me; and yet I would by no means be a judge in my own case. For tho' I should have nothing to
reproach

reproach myself for, that would not justify me in the sight of God, who knows me better than I do myself. Let us, therefore, suspend our judgments of one another till the coming of Christ, our proper judge, when every man's real character will be known, and they who are entitled to it will have praise of God.

- I have made use of my own name, and that of Apollos, as examples; that by reflecting upon our office you may form a true judgment of others, and not think more highly of any persons than the truth, and the language of scripture will authorize. Indeed, whatever superiority one man has over another, it is no just foundation for pride, but to be referred to God, from whom alone every thing good and excellent proceeds. You, however, who think yourselves greatly superior to me, in my absence behave like princes. I wish you were truly so, that I might partake of your dignity, and be exempt from the sufferings to which I am exposed. For God seems to treat us apostles as those who conduct the entertainments of the amphitheatre, treat those whom they produce the last in an exhibition, and whom they devote to certain death. For we are thus produced as a spectacle to all mankind, and even to angels. With respect to christian knowledge, we are considered as fools, while your teachers behave as if they knew every thing; and in all other respects they assume an advantage over us. To this very day we are exposed to every kind of reproach and ill usage, and are without any certain dwelling place. So destitute are we of all worldly goods, that we labour with our own hands to procure a subsistence, and bear every indignity without re-

senting it. By the world we are regarded with the greatest contempt, as those abject wretches whom the heathens sometimes sacrifice for the lustration of their cities.

Tho' I indulge myself in this strain of writing, I do it not to expose you, or to give you any pain, but as a faithful warning to you, such as a parent gives his children, for in this light you ought to consider me. Tho' you may have many teachers in christian knowledge, I only am your spiritual father, having converted you from heathenism to christianity. You ought, therefore, to learn of me, rather than of any others, and like my children endeavour to be what I am. For this reason I now send Timothy to admonish you, and remind you of my principles and my conduct, in all the christian churches where I come.

Some indeed, among you do not believe that I have the courage to appear before your present eloquent teachers. But by the divine permission I shall certainly visit you, and put their boasted superiority to the proof; not regarding their talents, as public speakers, but only their authority from God. For the evidence of christianity does not consist in eloquence, but in such miracles as prove its origin to be divine. Whenever I come, I shall behave with kindness, or severity, as I shall find you disposed towards me; so that it will depend intirely upon yourselves.

Ch. V. As a specimen of the spirit which the apostle intimated that he would shew when he should come to Corinth, he now reproves with great severity the conduct of one of their teachers who had married his

his father's wife, and their forbearance is allowing him to continue a minister of the church, and gives general advices on the subject.

1. We are not to suppose that the person here alluded to had married his own mother, but only a woman who had been married to his father. Had it been his own mother the censure would no doubt have been much stronger.

2. This person must have been one of their eloquent teachers, or they would not have been so proud of him as is here intimated.

3. By *delivering to Satan*, is to be understood rejection from the christian church, or communion with Christ, the world being supposed to be divided between the subjects of Christ and those of Satan, as two powers opposite to one another; the one a kingdom of righteousness, and leading to happiness, and the other of vice, leading to destruction.

6. The apostle having made use of this common comparison, of a little leaven insinuating itself into a large mass of dough, was led to extend it to the Jewish passover, which required the use of unleavened bread only; and then the death of Christ will be represented by the killing of the paschal lamb. Leaven represents wickedness, and bread without leaven, or free from any foreign mixture, will represent purity, sincerity, and virtue in general. Our Saviour had called the pride and hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees *their leaven*, so that it seems to have been a common figure of speech among the Jews.

9. This does not imply that he had ever written any epistle to the church of Corinth before this. For no mention is ever made of any epistle of Paul to the Corinthians besides two, and this is evidently the former of them. He only refers to what he had said before in this epistle.

13. To have no society whatever with persons whose conduct we cannot approve, or which we even condemn in the strongest manner, is impossible, while we live in the world. But it is in our power, and it is our duty, to abstain from any intimate society with them, and to refuse to admit them as members of our christian societies: The primitive christians were exceedingly strict in this respect; but the abuses of church discipline in later times have been the occasion of much relaxation; and no doubt it is a subject attended with great difficulty, when reduced to practice.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I am informed that you tolerate among you such a connection by marriage as deserves to be termed fornication, and such as is not practiced even among heathens, one of your society having married his father's wife, and that you are even proud of such a member, rather than lament that such a scandal has been committed, and expel him from your society. But tho' I am absent from you, I have determined, as tho' I was present, that when you are assembled as christians, I myself, and even Christ the head of the church being considered as present with you, to excommunicate that unworthy member,

ber, as more fit for the communion of Satan, than of Christ; that warned by this censure in this world he may repent, and be saved in the next at the coming of Christ.

Your boasting of such a person, whatever may be his qualifications, is no indication of any thing that is good. It rather resembles a little leaven, which will infect itself into a large mass of dough. Put away, therefore, this old leaven, that the whole mass may be renewed, and that nothing so impure, may remain among you. For Christ may be considered as the paschal lamb, who was sacrificed for us; and we ought to consider ourselves as keeping a feast of passover, which the Jews celebrate with unleavened bread. Let us christians, therefore, keep our passover, by putting away the leaven of wickedness, and use what may be called the pure unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I have said above, that you should expel the unworthy member I have mentioned from your society, but I do not mean that you should have no kind of communication with such persons, or with persons addicted to other vices, as the covetous, extortioners, idolaters, &c. for then you must not live in the world at all. But if any member of your christian society be addicted to these vices, or any other, with such a person I exhort you to have no communication, at least in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. As to those who are not of our society, it is not my business to pass any sentence upon them. They must be left to the righteous judgment of God; but surely you may be judges of the qualifications of the members of your own society, and should

exclude from it those who would be a disgrace to you.

Ch. VI. Among other divisions in the church of Corinth, it appears that they had disputes concerning their property, and carried them to the heathen tribunals. This appeared to the apostle to be unbecoming christians, and he expostulates with them on the subject.

1. The degree of blame in this particular case cannot be estimated by us, who are unacquainted with the particulars. No doubt it appeared to the apostle to arise from a litigious disposition, and that the christians disgraced themselves by appealing to the heathen tribunals in such cases. But there might occur cases of real difference of opinion respecting property; and the best judges of those matters are those whose business it is to decide concerning them, and an appeal might be made to them without any improper spirit on either side.

2. *These mean tribunals become you not.* MS. W. According to the Arabic and Ethiopic. W.

In ancient times the business of deciding causes always belonged to the supreme magistrate. Thus both David and Solomon presided in tribunals of justice. It is, therefore taken for granted by the apostle, that whereas in the prophecy of Daniel, it is said that the *people of the saints of the most high shall possess the kingdom*, that they shall all act the part of judges. Our Saviour also said that when he should enter on his kingdom, his twelve apostles should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This, however, is figurative language; as is the representation of Christ sitting and judging

judging all nations, and placing some on his right hand, and others on his left. What it is that is really to be understood by this, we cannot at present know. It will, no doubt, be sufficiently verified, tho' perhaps in a manner, of which we cannot at this time have any proper conception.

3. This is often understood, and was especially by the antients, of *evil angels*, the prince of whom is said to have been cast out. But perhaps it may refer to the pre-eminence that Christ is said to possess over *angels, principalities, and powers*, and to all things being put under him with respect to the church. And whatever powers or prerogatives are given to Christ, will be shared by him with his disciples, according to his prayer before his death, in which he says, John xvii, 22, *The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one.*

4. If this be rendered positively, it may intimate that the apostle thought that even the most insignificant member of their church might decide the cause in question; but if interrogatively, which is most probable, it signifies that surely they will not appeal to persons of whom the whole christian church thought so ill, as they did of the heathen magistrates. The Romans permitted the Jews to decide disputes among themselves by their own laws; and as the christians were at first considered as a Jewish sect, they might have the same privilege.

7. Our Saviour said Matt. v, 40, *If any man will sue thee at the law and take thy coat, let him take thy cloak also; and that we are not to resist evil, and to this*
the

the apostle probably alludes. But it is only general advice, signifying that christians should cultivate a spirit of meekness and forbearance, and that they should not be apt to resent injuries. Cases, however, might occur, in which the good of society would require a different conduct. Neither this apostle, nor our Saviour himself, conformed literally to this precept.

8. Since both parties could not be in the right, one of them must have injured the other; but it does not follow, as the apostle seems to have thought, that it must have been by design. They might both think themselves injured.

11. Here we see the great and excellent object of christianity. It was to reform the world. But this is necessarily a gradual thing. It was not the mere belief of christianity, or of any thing else, that could effect this. To be convinced of its truth might be an indication of a previous good disposition, of candour, and a love of truth; but it could only be frequent reflection on this truth that could produce any real change in dispositions that were previously vicious. It is not a single action, but a *habit*, that is to be formed, and this necessarily requires time. Pretended instantaneous conversions must be delusions, and it is generally found that they are not lasting. It was evident, however, from the testimony of the apostle in this place, and from all history, even written by heathens, that christianity did produce a great and happy change in the moral conduct of its professors. The emperor Julian, who hated christianity, bears ample testimony to this, when he reproaches the

the heathen priests with the behaviour of the christians.

THE PARAPHRASE.

When differences arise among you concerning civil matters, you should not have recourse to the heathen magistrates to have them decided, but settle them among yourselves. Do you not know that all the kingdoms of the world are to be given to Christ, and the saints, who will then be supreme magistrates, and of course judges. If this be your destination, are you not already qualified to decide cases which, comparatively speaking, must be of inferior magnitude. As angels, principalities and powers, are to be subject to Christ, and therefore to his disciples, who will share with him in all his power and glory, you ought to be equal to all the concerns of this lower world.

If, then, there be differences among you concerning the things of this world, will you have recourse to heathen magistrates, persons of whom you make no account, to decide them. This is disgraceful to you. Is there no man of sufficient ability and impartiality among yourselves to judge between one christian and another, but brother must go to law with brother, and that before unbelievers.

This litigious disposition is highly censurable. You ought rather to suffer the wrong that you believe is done to you, without complaining; whereas since one of the parties must do wrong, he injures and defrauds a christian brother. But you ought to know that no persons

of this character can inherit the happiness of the heavenly state. It greatly behoves you not to deceive yourselves in a matter of this infinite importance. No person addicted to injustice, or any other vice, can attain to that happy state. Such, no doubt, in time past were some of your society; but on embracing christianity, the initiatory rite of which is the baptism of repentance, you were, as may be said, washed from all sinful impurity, and became the peculiar people of God, zealous of all good works.

It is evident that the new teachers, who set themselves up against Paul at Corinth, were of that sect which was afterwards, if not at that time, distinguished by the appellation of *Gnostics*, or pretenders to superior knowledge; and it was a fundamental principle with them, that all *evil* arose from *matter*, which was a clog to the soul, and a thing so despicable as to be unworthy of our concern. They even maintained, as it is said, that the vices of the body did not affect the soul. On these principles they were naturally led to deny the resurrection, also to make light of eating meat sacrificed to idols, and also of fornication, to which the citizens of Corinth were much addicted. On this head the apostle expostulates with them with much earnestness, as a practice unworthy of christians, and wholly inconsistent with the principles of christianity.

12. This alludes to the liberty for which the Gnostic teachers pleaded with respect to eating meat offered in sacrifice to idols. He did not mean that any thing forbidden by the law of God was lawful to him.

13. Tho' our corporeal appetites were given us to be indulged while we live in this world, yet an end will be put to this world, and the whole of the present system; and to that period we ought to have respect, as well as to the things of time.

That is, Christ will take care for the body by raising it to life at the last day.

17. That is, *united to Christ*, tho' in a spiritual sense.

18. All christians may be said to belong to God, because he has purchased them with the life of his Son; but this can only be said in a figurative, and by no means in a literal sense. For then there must have been some person of whom he bought them, and who could this be. When christians began to realize these figurative expressions, it was imagined that, man being in the power of the devil, in consequence of sin, God redeemed us from the devil, by abandoning to him the life of his son. And, strange as this idea now appears, it prevailed for many centuries; and it was not till long after this that any person imagined that it was Christ, and not God, who was the purchaser; having given his life to the justice of God, in order to redeem us from that death to which all mankind had been doomed. This was a total change in the system of atonement, a satisfaction for sin, and was not completed till after the reformation; when Luther, in order to combat with more advantage the popish doctrine of *human merit*, advanced the merits of Christ in opposition to it. Then, but not before, it was conceived that God could not forgive sin till an adequate satisfaction had been made to his

his offended justice ; and as sin was considered to be an infinite evil, as committed against an infinite being, it was necessary that the person who made satisfaction, should himself be infinite, or God. But you find nothing like this in the scriptures. There God is uniformly represented as forgiving sin *freely*, on the repentance and reformation of the sinner, and therefore we are required to forgive as we hope to be forgiven. And so far are we from being bought from God by the death of Christ, that whenever this figure of speech is used, God, and not Christ, is said to be the purchaser.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Your new teachers are advocates for the indulgence of the body ; thinking they may innocently partake of the feasts in honour of the heathen gods, tho' even fornication accompanies those feasts. But admitting that such a thing was innocent in itself, and therefore lawful, it may be highly inexpedient, and improper ; and tho' I might lawfully indulge my appetite, I would not be a slave to it. It is true that meat is made for the support of the body, which absolutely requires it ; but we should look farther than the mere act of indulgence, even to that time when the whole of the present system will be changed.

Far, indeed, is fornication from being a thing innocent in itself, as your teachers pretend. The body as the whole man, is to be considered as sacred to the Lord, and it is a prostitution to use it to so base a purpose. The Lord has also a concern even for the bodies of his disciples, since he will raise them from the dead.

For

For that divine power which raised up Christ from the dead, will also raise all his followers from the grave.

If you be christians, even your bodies are members of him who is the head of the church. Shall I then take what belongs to the body of Christ, and join it to a harlot. For he who prostitutes himself to a harlot makes one body with her, in the same manner as a man and his wife become one. But every christian being united to Christ, is one with him, not indeed in a carnal sense, but in a spiritual one.

By all means then, my brethren, avoid this sin of fornication, of which your present teachers make little account, and to which your citizens are so much addicted. Other sins do not so immediately injure and defile the body as this does. Your very bodies may be considered as the temple of the holy spirit, which dwells in you, that spirit which is from God ; so that you are not your own, but his. Since, then, God has, as it were, purchased you for himself, in giving his son for you, glorify God with your bodies, as well as your spirits, since they are equally his.

Ch. VIII. The seventh chapter of this epistle relates to a question which had been proposed to the apostle concerning *marriage*, which, it is known, the Gnostics thought to be inconsistent with a high degree of perfection. With respect to this subject, the apostle observes, that, considering the state of christianity at that time, it might, in some cases, as his own, be more advisable not to have any family connections, lest a man's mind should be too much occupied with the things of this life, which might subject him to much trouble and anxiety,

anxiety, but that marriage was certainly in itself right, and in other cases to be encouraged. He also gives various directions concerning those christians who were married to unbelievers, informing them that the law and obligation of marriage was not dissolved by their new state with respect to religion, and that it might be a means of bringing the other party to the profession of christianity. But the whole of this subject, as being of little consequence to us at present, I omit.

In this chapter the apostle considers more particularly the case of eating meat offered in sacrifice to idols, and it appears to me that, admitting for the present the principles and pretences of the Gnostics, as that eating such meat was lawful in itself, it was no longer so when others saw it in a different light, and were drawn into sin by it.

1. The sense is very imperfect. He was probably going on to say what he does in v. 4, viz: *an idol is nothing in the world*; but considering who they were who made an improper use of this principle, viz. the Gnostic teachers, who were so proud of their superior knowledge, he introduces some observations concerning the insignificance of knowledge, compared with virtue, in order to check their pride.

3. According to the Ethiopic version it is, *If anyone loves God he knows this matter truly. W.*

The meaning probably is, that *God is known by such a person*. The Gnostics pretended to great knowledge concerning God, and divine things. In opposition to them, the apostle observes, that the best knowledge of God is that which produces a proper disposition of mind
towards

towards him ; alluding perhaps to that saying of Solomon, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*

The gods who were worshipped by the heathen world were either natural objects, as the sun, &c. or dead men. With the Greeks they were chiefly of the latter class. In the former case they were real substances, tho' no proper objects of worship. In the latter case they might be said to be, strictly speaking, *nothing*, as there were no such beings as they invoked, viz. the souls of dead men. But the meaning of the apostle seems to have been, that since idol worship consists of absurd ceremonies, meat offered to idols ought to be considered in the same light as if nothing at all had been done to it. It was still as proper for its original use, viz. the food of man, as ever, and was not to be thrown away.

6. There cannot be a more decisive evidence of any thing than that which this passage affords, that, in the opinion of the apostle Paul, no being was to be considered as God, but the Father only ; and that Christ was by no means intitled to that appellation. If Christ had been justly intitled to the appellation of *God*, and had been a proper object of worship, he could never have said that there is but *one God, the Father*, especially as, immediately after, he mentions Christ, not as God, but only as *Lord, or master*. This would necessarily have led his reader into a mistake, if Christ had really been God.

7. This may signify a persuasion of the presence of the heathen deity in their sacrifices.

According to some MSS. it is, *some from the custom, or habit, of idolatry.* W.

In this verse and the following it appears to me that the apostle is arguing on the principles of those persons whose conduct he condemns, and perhaps ironically. For he shews that, admitting their principles, viz. that in itself there was no sin in partaking of the religious festivals of the heathens, it did not appear so to all; and therefore, that out of regard to them, they ought not to take that liberty, benevolence being preferable to knowledge. For the apostle could never mean seriously to allow that it was innocent to partake in such feasts; and the supposition in v. 10 goes so far as to place this enlightened christian at a feast in the very temple of an idol.

To join in such feasts the apostle elsewhere calls *partaking of the table of demons*, and opposes it to the *table of the Lord*. He also calls it, *having communion with demons*. Moreover, to eat of things offered in sacrifice to idols, was expressly forbidden by all the apostles at a solemn meeting, to consider of the restrictions under which it might be proper to lay the Gentile christians, and it is severely reprimanded by our Saviour in his message to the churches in the revelation. Indeed, if christians might lawfully do this, they might have avoided all persecutions from heathens.

THE PARAPHRASE.

With respect to eating of meat offered in sacrifice to idols, concerning which you wish to know my opinion, and which the pretenders to deep knowledge among you maintain to be lawful, I would observe, that we all, even those who do not pretend to deep knowledge
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are sensible that an idol, in itself considered, is not to be regarded. But as to those who pretend to so much more knowledge than others, but who make an improper use of it, they must be admonished, that even true knowledge is apt to puff up, and that brotherly love, which implies a concern for the good and edification of others is greatly preferable to it. But, in general, they who pretend to this deep knowledge are really the most ignorant, and know nothing as they ought to do. It is the love of God, and a regard to his authority, that is the best sign of true knowledge. A person who is possessed of this, whatever else he is ignorant of, has the truest knowledge of God, and, in return, is known and accepted of God.

But to return to the question from which these observations arose, viz. the eating of meat offered in sacrifice to idols, we all know, as I was observing, that an idol in itself is to be considered as *nothing*; and therefore that meat consecrated to an idol may be considered as having had some insignificant ceremony performed upon it, which cannot affect the proper use of it. For, properly speaking, there is no God but one, tho' those that are called gods, and worshipped by the heathens, are numerous. We christians acknowledge no other than *one God*, whom we stile *the Father*, of whom are all things, and whose we are; as there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things are to be brought into subjection to this one God, and especially those who believe in him.

It must be evident, however, to those pretenders to deep knowledge, and liberal practice, among you, that

all persons cannot enter into their views of things; but that some, whom they will say are weak, will think it an act of idolatry to partake of feasts in honour of heathen gods, and that by their example they may be led to do what they think to be wrong. Let those who think themselves wise, and that they may innocently take these liberties, consider that, upon their own principles, eating is a thing indifferent to moral virtue, and of itself cannot recommend us to God, or injure us in his favour. But you should by all means have some respect for others, and see that your conduct be no snare to them. For, certainly, one of those who you may consider as weak, seeing you, whom he considers as a person of superior knowledge, partaking of a feast in honour of an idol, and in a temple dedicated to the idol, if he be emboldened by your example to join with you, it must be with a secret disapprobation of what he does, and to the wounding of his conscience. And thus, through your pretensions to great knowledge, a christian brother, one for whom Christ died, sins and perishes. But thus to draw a weak brother into sin, and injure him, is to offend and injure Christ himself, who considers every injury done to any disciple of his, tho' even so weak, and seemingly insignificant, as done to himself. In this case, therefore, whatever liberty I may think myself entitled to, if the welfare of my christian brother was affected by my eating, I would not eat on any consideration, and least of all to make a show of my liberty and superior knowledge in these matters.

CH. IX. There was a remarkable difference between the conduct of the apostle Paul, and that of the new

new teachers, who endeavoured to lower his influence in the church of Corinth. He had maintained himself by the labour of his hands, while he resided in that city; whereas these teachers, who distinguished themselves by their eloquent harangues, imitating the Grecian philosophers, were paid, and perhaps very liberally, for their services. And it being generally known that Peter, and the other apostles, did not labour with their hands, as Paul did, they might make a handle of this circumstance to insinuate that Paul, not being properly an apostle, had not the same right in this respect that others had. In this part of the epistle, therefore, Paul largely insists upon his right to a maintenance, as an apostle, and indeed as a preacher of the gospel, as well as Peter, and the rest, tho' he declined making use of it, that his conduct might better facilitate the spread of the gospel, by impressing the minds of his hearers with the idea of his having no view in his preaching besides the good of others, and not any emolument of his own.

1. That is, at liberty to claim my rights as an apostle, and preacher of the gospel, meaning a right of maintenance.

The primary qualification of an apostle was his being a proper witness of the resurrection of Jesus. As he attended at all the great festivals at Jerusalem, besides preaching in almost every part of the country of Judea and Galilee, it cannot be supposed but that almost every person, at least every person of any note, or education, as Paul, was acquainted with his person. Paul, being educated at Jerusalem, must have had many opportuni-

ties of seeing him. And, for the sake of making him a proper witness of his resurrection, Jesus appeared to him, as he says, *last of all, as to one born out of due time*. He likewise received his instructions to preach the gospel from Jesus himself in person, as the other apostles had, of which he gives several intimations.

2. This could not refer to his successful preaching of the gospel only; for Philip and others, who were no apostles, had great success in the same way; but probably to the holy spirit, or miraculous powers, being conferred upon them by the laying on of Paul's hands, a privilege which seems to have been peculiar to the apostles; and for these gifts the christians at Corinth, where no apostle had been before Paul, were particularly distinguished, as we find by this epistle.

4. That is, without bodily labour.

5. This right of maintenance extended not to the preachers only, but to any of their family who accompanied them, and were useful to them in their travels. From Paul's insisting on his right to take with him a wife, as well as a sister, that is, any female relation, some have thought that he had a wife, but that she did not accompany him in his travels. But from what he says, on other occasions, as that in time of persecution it were better for other christians to be as he was, it is most probable that he had no wife at that time, if he ever had one.

That is, the most eminent of the apostles, who were James the brother of Jesus, Peter, and John.

It is evident from this passage, that Peter at least had a wife, and that she lived with him, and accompanied

nied him in his travels, after he was an apostle, and as the apostles had no peculiar privilege in this respect, the plea of the Roman catholics for the celibacy of the clergy is void of all foundation. Indeed, it was several centuries before their regulations in that respect, so favourable to the interests of the court of Rome, were established.

6. As Paul and Barnabas distinguished themselves by preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, without laying them under any obligation to observe the laws of Moses, for which these new teachers appear to have been very zealous, it is not improbable but their conduct in this respect was one circumstance that made them so obnoxious; and their deportment and their conduct being different from those of the other apostles, on this account their right to rank with them might be thought questionable.

8. That is, from the nature of things, without any particular authority.

9. Was it for the sake of *cattle* only that this direction was given, or was it not designed to have a more general application, extending to *men* in similar circumstances.

12. In this the apostle probably alludes to the new teachers.

14. This appears from the instructions of Jesus to the twelve before their mission, where he said they might *eat what was set before them*, and that the *labourer was worthy of his hire*.

17. 18. This may be rendered, *If I do this willingly,*

ly, I have a reward, but if I be intrusted with an office without my consent, what is my reward then. . W.

18. The meaning of this is that Paul pleaded no merit for merely preaching the gospel, which it was his absolute duty to do ; but for declining the advantage to which he had a right while he was so employed, that he might preach with the more success.

THE PARAPHRASE.

With respect to the right of maintenance, of which your new teachers so amply avail themselves, I, especially as an apostle, might certainly claim it. Have I not the office, rank, and privileges of an apostle ? Have not I, as well as any other apostle, seen our Lord Jesus Christ since his resurrection, so as to be a proper witness of it; and are not you, as the fruits of my ministry, under the same obligation to me that any other christians are under to other apostles ? Whatever I be with respect to others, you certainly ought to consider me in that light. I might even appeal to you as a proof and testimonial of my being an apostle. My reply to those who question me on that subject is, have not I, and my fellow labourers, a right to a sufficient maintenance, as the reward of our labour ? Have I not even a right to the maintenance of a wife, or other female relation, who might travel with me, as well as other apostles, even the most eminent, such as James, the brother of Jesus, or Peter himself ? Of all the apostles, and preachers of the gospel, have I and Barnabas only no right to a subsistence without labour ?

Without

Without availing myself of any plea of privilege that may be supposed peculiar to an apostle, is it not understood to be agreeable to natural equity, that any man in the capacity of a soldier, a husbandman, or a shepherd, has a right to a maintenance from those who employ him; the husbandman from the farm that he treads, and the shepherd from the flock.

Nor has this maxim the sanction of reason only. It has the express countenance of the law of Moses. Is it not written there, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn?* Was this, do you imagine, said for the sake of oxen only, or had it not a farther and more general view, viz. to men; intimating that, whatever it be on which men bestow labour, as in plowing or sowing, they should be animated with the prospect of advantage from it. And tho' the labour which we bestow on you does not relate to temporal things, so that you derive no advantage from it with respect to this life, you derive from it advantages of a higher kind, viz. that which relates to a future and immortal life; and therefore you ought to think us abundantly entitled to a recompence from the things of this transitory state.

If others actually take advantage of this right with respect to you, much more might I do it, but I have declined it, and chuse rather to suffer want than that the progress of the gospel should be impeded by a suspicion of my having mercenary views in preaching it.

This right of maintenance for our labours is established, as I shall once more observe, in the practice of the law, according to which the priests who minister in the

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the temple, and at the altar, have a right to partake of the offerings that are made there ; and our Lord Jesus Christ has likewise said that the labourer in his gospel *is worthy of his meat.*

From what I have observed respecting my right, do not suppose that I mean to insist upon it. For I had rather perish through want of necessaries, than lose the honour that I claim in consequence of foregoing all these things for the sake of the more successful preaching of the gospel. Not that I can plead any merit with respect to merely preaching the gospel. For that is my absolute duty, and woe is unto me if I do not discharge it. If I do this freely and gratuitously, and decline taking the subsistence to which, as a preacher of the gospel I have a right, so far I have what may be called merit ; having done something more than was required of me, but I plead none for merely discharging a duty incumbent upon me. My claim to merit then is founded on my preaching the gospel without any temporal advantage whatever from it, or making use of the right that I have, even to a bare maintenance for my labour.

The apostle having asserted his liberty that, as an apostle, and a preacher of the gospel he might have insisted upon, proceeds to observe that, for the sake of the gospel he was ready to submit to every man, and every thing ; and in allusion to the public games of Greece, one of the most celebrated of which was in the neighbourhood of Corinth, he inculcates the great duty of a superiority to all self indulgence, and of the most vigorous exertions of all our faculties ; this being as necessary

fary to gain the rewards of christianity, as it was to gain the prizes contended for in those games.

20. This must not be interpreted with too much rigour. For otherwise we shall make the apostle a most inconsistent and hypocritical character, one who had recourse to the most unworthy artifices to gain a good end; whereas he solemnly disclaims the maxim of *doing evil that good may come*. He was so far from complying improperly with those who would have imposed the yoke of the law on the Gentile converts, on whom it was not obligatory, that he incurred the hatred of his nation, and offended many of his christian brethren, by his strenuous contending for the liberty of the gospel with respect to them. And if he had not thought the law of Moses obligatory on the Jews, which some infer from this passage, I cannot think that he would have been induced, in circumcising Timothy, and his behaviour at his last visit to Jerusalem, to have countenanced that opinion. His meaning, therefore, can only be that he was willing to oblige all persons as far as he innocently could. It is possible that he might mean that, in preaching the gospel, he availed himself of principles peculiar to Jews, with Jews, and of principles allowed by Gentiles, with Gentiles.

22. That is, I am careful not to use my own liberty so as to lead others to do that which their consciences would condemn.

23. This may mean either the rewards of the gospel in a future state, or, as some rather think, the successful propagation of it, which was his great object in this life.

24. This

24. This argument against self indulgence must have had peculiar force with the Corinthians, in whose neighbourhood the Isthmian games were celebrated.

25. This was a proper lesson for the Corinthians, who were remarkable for their luxury and sensual indulgence. They who proposed to contend in these games were obliged to conform to a regulated diet; and certain exercises, under professed masters, who knew what was necessary to give the body that degree of vigour which would best qualify them for great exertions.

The rewards in the Grecian games were generally crowns of leaves which soon faded.

26. It should rather have been rendered *not obscurely, but as one who would distinguish himself among the foremost in the race.*

It was usual, previous to any real contest, for the combatants to exercise their arms in all the motions used in a combat, moving them as if they had a real antagonist, tho' they had none. This was called *fighting the air*, or *fighting a shadow*.

27. This is a happy turn to represent the enemy he was to contend with to be *himself*, his own body, his sensual appetites, a lesson peculiarly proper for the Corinthians.

This does not imply that the apostle had any serious apprehensions of being rejected at last, as one who had not done his duty; but it certainly implies that, without consistency of character and perseverance, he, or any person, will be rejected at last, how promising soever may be his professions, or his conduct, for a time

time ; and if it was necessary in his case, much more might the Corinthians infer that it was so in theirs.

If it be thought that, in the whole of this chapter, and on other occasions, the apostle wrote too much about himself, I would observe, that besides the reason he had for it, this circumstance is one among many other internal traits of generosity in the apostle's writings, that they were real epistles, written on real occasions. And as they are, in order of time, the first writings of any christian, and published during the first promulgation of the gospel, while the events to which he alludes were recent, and yet have always been received as genuine, they furnish the same evidence for the truth of the gospel history, that the epistles of Cicero, and others do, for the truth of the Roman history ; and it is as impossible for unbelievers to account for the existence of the one, as for that of the other.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Tho' with respect to my right, as an apostle, or as a preacher of the gospel, I be inferior to no man ; yet for the sake of preaching it to the more advantage, and gaining the greater number of profelytes, I willingly make myself the servant of all. I am ready to comply as far as I possibly can with the prejudices of all persons, that I may not offend them, and thereby throw an unnecessary obstacle to their receiving the gospel ; and I endeavour to avail myself of their peculiar principles. With the zealous Jews I may be said to be a Jew, reasoning with them from their sacred books. With the Gentiles

Gentiles, who know nothing of the law, I make myself as one of them, arguing from the principles of natural reason, that I may gain those who have not the law. However, I am far from holding myself to be under no obligation with respect to God, or to Christ, but am subject to their laws.

With the weak and scrupulous, with respect to meats, and other things of an indifferent nature, I am careful to do nothing that might lead them to violate their consciences. This I do for their benefit, and thus I become, as it were, all things to all men, that I may by this means be useful to them, my object in this being the more successful propagation of the gospel, thereby to make others partakers of the blessings of it as well as myself.

You may take a lesson in this respect from the public games, to the exhibition of which you are accustomed. In the foot race many run, tho' only one or a few obtain the prize. Do you, therefore, so run the christian race, that you may obtain the prize proposed in the gospel. He who proposes to contend as a wrestler in your games must submit to a strict regimen, and must never exceed the bounds of temperance. What they do to obtain a perishable crown, we should do to obtain one that is incorruptible, and that will not, like a crown of leaves, fade away.

With respect to myself, I would run as one who wishes to distinguish himself, and appear among the foremost, and not pass unnoticed in the croud of ordinary combatants. As a boxer, I would not lose my time in a mere prelude to an engagement, beating the air
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but, considering my sensual appetites as the enemy I have to contend with, would strenuously exert myself to gain a victory over them ; lest when I have preached the doctrine of temperance to others, I myself be rejected, as having failed in the duty I inculcate on them.

Ch. X. The apostle having used other arguments to dissuade the Corinthian christians from the vices of idolatry and fornication, and to prevent their complaining of the hardships to which they were exposed, reminds them of the history of the Israelites, who notwithstanding their great privileges and obligations, offended God by the very vices to which the Corinthians were addicted, and suffered by his righteous judgments in consequence of it.

2. Their being covered with a cloud, and passing through the sea, which inclosed them, may be compared to the christian rite of baptism, in which a person was plunged in water. But we are not to suppose that this was a proper baptizing of the Israelites, or intended to prefigure the christian baptism, any more than the killing of the paschal lamb was intended to prefigure the death of Christ. For then there would have been some account of it in the original history.

As the phrase being *baptized unto Moses* does not imply that Moses was a god, so being baptized unto Christ, or in the name of Christ, does not imply that he is God. It is a mode of taking upon us the profession of that religion of which he was the founder.

4. The Israelites, besides being, as it were baptized, might be said by way of figure of speech to partake of another

another christian ordinance, viz. the Lord's supper, in eating the bread that came down from heaven, and drinking the water which issued from the rock.

8. Here are exhortations against the very vices to which the Corinthians were most addicted viz. idolatry and that fornication, which was encouraged by it.

9. This alludes to the complaints the Israelites made of the hardships they met with in the wilderness, and their wishes to return to Egypt. As they did wrong to complain of the government of God, we should do wrong to complain of the government of Christ; the profession of his religion exposes us to various hardships, since the rewards of christianity infinitely overbalance them.

11. That is, the scriptures were written for general use, and we, in the remotest ages, are to learn by the examples recorded in them; not that the history of the Israelites there recorded had any original reference to us.

13. Such as men of reason and reflection may well bear. At that time the Romans had not become persecutors of the christians, any farther than some individuals among the heathens had been infligated by the Jews to do them ill offices.

To whatever farther or greater trials they should be exposed, they would find supports equal to them. And we do find that in the most violent persecutions christians have been able to bear all that the utmost rage of their enemies could inflict upon them, and this has been effected by their firm belief in a future state,
which

which alone, without any supernatural agency of God upon the mind, has been sufficient for the purpose.

14. The apostle proceeds to use farther arguments to dissuade the Corinthians from eating meat sacrificed to idols, and particularly urges that of their partaking of the Lord's supper, as a thing in its nature inconsistent with it.

15. The apostle frequently alludes to the boasted knowledge of the Corinthians, and sometimes in an ironical way.

17. It was the custom of the primitive christians to bring one loaf of bread to the Lord's supper, and divide it among them all, to denote their perfect unity, as the disciples of one master, at whose table they were equally guests.

18. In all sacrifices the meat was considered as the provision of the idol's table, the priests as the servants, and those who brought the sacrifice, and who partook of the meat that had been offered, as the guests.

21. The argument of the apostle in this place is, that we cannot have communion with two persons so opposite to one another as Christ and the heathen deities.

22. Because God has said, *I will not give my glory to another nor my praise to graven images*; and in the Old Testament, he is always represented as a jealous God, not bearing any rivalry with the gods of the heathens.

23. This is what the apostle had said before, and might have been retorted upon him. He, therefore, explains himself farther on the subject; observing that,

tho' the eating of this meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols might be lawful in itself, yet since it might be offensive to others, it ought to be refrained from.

29. If the person who is eating with me has scruples about eating that meat, tho' it is not in the idol's temple, and therefore the eating of it may not be considered as communicating with the idol, and on that account I may not have any scruple about it, I should refrain from eating, lest he should be induced by my example to do the same, notwithstanding his scruples.

33. From this particular case the apostles take occasion to give this excellent general rule of conduct, not to consider ourselves so much as others; and to consult the honour of that God, who is alike the father and the friend of us all.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I cannot be too earnest in my persuasion to abstain from any practice that savours of idolatry; and with this view I will urge another argument, the force of which, as you pretend to superior knowledge, you will easily perceive. Consider the Lord's supper, and the elements of bread and wine of which we then partake. Are they not called *the body and blood of Christ*? For as, in the celebration of this rite, we make use of one loaf, and divide it among us, it represents the unity of the church; and in partaking of it, we acknowledge ourselves to be one body with Christ. Do not they who partake of the Jewish sacrifices hold communion with the God whose altar it is, by eating, as it were, at his table?

ble? How, then, does this agree with your partaking of the sacrifices of the heathens.

Not that I say their idols are of any account, or that their sacrifices are not in themselves perfectly contemptible, but they are understood to be sacrifices to demons, and not to the true God; and, as christians, you ought not to have any communion with those demons. You cannot consistently have communion, or fellowship, with both. This would be to provoke the jealousy of God, who has declared that he will not give his glory to another. Shall we enter into a contest with him, as if we could prevail against him.

You may reply, in my own words, that this action is lawful in itself, tho' perhaps not expedient. But tho' it should be lawful to me, it may obstruct the edification and good of others; and we are in duty bound to consult not our own advantage only, but that of others also. If any meat be exposed to sale in the open market, it may, no doubt, be bought, and eaten without scruple. For *the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, and the fruit of his bounty to man, which I will not reject. Also, if any of you be invited to an entertainment, and be disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without scruple. But if any scrupulous brother who is present observe to you, that the meat with which you are served has been offered in sacrifice to an idol, and on that account think it unlawful to eat of it, in that case do you refrain; and that on his account who has scruples, and not on your own, who have none, but consider that meat in no other light than any other of the gifts of God to his creatures. In this case

you respect the consciences of other men, not your own. For, exclusive of this circumstance, my conscience is not affected by the scruples of any other man.

If I give thanks to God for the provision of which I partake, and thereby consider it as his gift, and not as any thing belonging to the idol to which it may have been consecrated, what just cause of offence do I give? But even in eating or drinking, or any other indifferent action, we should consult the glory of God, and the edification of others; avoiding the giving of offence to Jew or Gentile, or any part of the church of God. This is my general rule. I wish to avoid giving cause of offence to any person, and would not consult my own satisfaction so much as that of others, especially in what respects their moral conduct and future happiness.

Ch. XI. 1. In this part of the epistle the apostle gives directions with respect to the decency of public worship, and the different manner in which it became men and women to appear there.

4. It is, and ever was, the custom in the East, to express reverence by putting off the shoes, and not by uncovering the head, as with us. Thus when Moses approached the burning bush, the voice from it said (Ex. iii, v.) *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* Also the priests in the temple served barefooted. The Mahometans always leave their slippers at the door of the mosque when they go in to worship.

5. Tho' men kept their heads covered, it was always reckoned indecent for women to appear so, or even without a veil. And this custom the apostle directs that

that they should observe, tho' they should pray or speak in the presence of men, which, though he did not approve in general, they might be called to do on particular occasions.

7. The man, in some measure, represents God, who is supreme, and is inferior to him only; whereas the woman was appointed to be subject to the man.

9. Here the apostle argues from the Mosaic account of the creation, on which, however, for reasons which I have given elsewhere, I would not lay much stress.

10. To have power over the head, the ancients say meant to cover the head. The clause *because of the angels*, is very variously interpreted. On the whole it seems to me most natural to suppose that it referred to angels, whom the apostle might suppose to be present in christian assemblies, as well as in other places, tho' invisible; and that out of respect to them, as well as to men, women should have their heads covered.

11. Notwithstanding the superiority of the man to the woman, they are necessary to each other; and both bear the same relation to God, and are subject to him.

15. By nature in this place the apostle could only mean *established customs*, according to which it was deemed indecent in men to wear long hair, but proper and graceful in women.

16. Whatever some might object to the regulations here prescribed by the apostle, he replies that, such was the custom in all christian churches, and to this they ought to conform.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Let me exhort you, my brethren, to follow my example, but on no other account than that I am a follower of Christ ; that so ye may be his disciples, and not mine. On the whole, I have reason to be satisfied with you in this respect, as you observe the rules which I prescribed for your conduct.

With respect to your behaviour in your public assemblies, attend to this general maxim, that the inferior ought to shew a deference to the superior ; that God is the superior with respect to Christ, Christ with respect to man, and man with respect to woman. When men appear in christian assemblies, they fail in their respect to Christ, if they have their heads uncovered ; but it is the reverse with respect to women. If they pray or preach with their heads uncovered, they shew a want of respect to their superior, man, before whom it would be deemed shameful to appear even without a veil. If she uncover her head, she might as well have no hair, which was given her to serve as a veil. On the contrary, men ought to appear with their heads covered, being made in the image of God, and inferior to none but him ; whereas women were appointed to be subject to men. For originally women were made to be suitable companions to men.

Women ought also to cover their heads out of respect to the angels, who may be supposed to be present in our assemblies.

Notwithstanding this, men and women are mutually necessary to each other ; as the woman was made
out

out of man, men are born of women, and both are of God. Judge, however, for yourselves, according to the usual rules of decency. Has it a decent appearance for a woman to be seen uncovered? It is, indeed, reckoned unseemly for men to wear long hair, but in women it is proper and even graceful, being given her to serve as a veil. If, however, any person will oppose these regulations, I can only say that, in all christian churches, the rules that I recommend are strictly observed.

The disorderly manner in which the Lord's Supper had been administered by the Corinthians, led the apostle to explain the nature of it, and to rectify some mistakes concerning it.

18. Of what kind these divisions were, does not appear. Perhaps they who formed themselves into parties on some other account, celebrated this rite in separate companies.

21. It was customary with the Greeks to meet in a kind of club, to which every person brought his own provision; and in this manner it has been supposed that these christians partook of the Lord's Supper.

23. By this it appears that Paul had been instructed in every thing relating to the gospel by Christ in person; and among other things had learned of him in what manner he had instituted this rite.

26. This account is almost word for word the same with that of Matthew, but it is no where else so expressly said, that this rite was intended to be continued in the christian church till the second coming of Christ.

27. The term *unworthily* means, no doubt, the indecent manner in which the Corinthians had celebrated this rite ; and being *guilty of the body and blood of Christ*, means their treating the memorials of it in an improper manner. There is no danger, therefore, of any persons at this time being guilty of this offence.

28. That is, let him consider the nature of this institution, and comport himself accordingly.

29. That is, he is liable to censure.

30. The apostle, no doubt, thought that the sickness and deaths that had been in the church were a judgment from God on account of their abuse of this ordinance ; but in this he might be mistaken. Nothing is more uncertain than the interpretation of the conduct of providence, which in general treats all persons alike, without any regard to their moral character or conduct ; any farther than this has a natural and necessary influence on their persons and affairs. Retribution is reserved for a future and more proper time.

THE PARAPHRASE.

With respect to the subject of which I am going to treat, it gives me concern that I must censure your conduct. For your administration of the Lord's supper, instead of promoting your edification, as it is calculated to do, really answers a very unworthy purpose. Your contentious spirit I hear, and cannot but believe it, shews itself even in your public assemblies. We were, indeed, apprized by our Saviour, that such offences would come, and they have their use in the plan of
divine

divine providence, as they try the spirits of men, and are a means of discovering and improving what is really excellent in them.

Your method of administering the Lord's Supper makes it to be quite a different thing from what it was intended. For you bring your usual suppers to the place of assembly, and eat and drink without waiting for one another ; and it happens that some have but little, and others too much ; whereas you ought to eat and drink for the purpose of refreshment at your own houses ; and those of you who have plenty ought not to expose those of your brethren who are not so well provided. This is a conduct for which I certainly cannot praise you.

What I taught you on this subject I received from Jesus Christ himself, and it was as follows. On the night on which he was betrayed, he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it ; saying, *Take and eat of it.* It represents my body, which is broken for you ; and do you the same in remembrance of me. He also took the cup when he had supped of it, and said, This wine represents the New Testament confirmed in my blood, and whenever you drink of it, do it as a memorial of my death. For whenever you partake of this religious rite, you commemorate my death ; and it is my intention that it continue to be celebrated in my church till my second coming.

This is the purport of what Jesus did and said on the occasion. Let every person, therefore, consider what the design of this ordinance is before he partakes
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of it. For to eat and drink on the occasion in the indecent manner in which you have conducted yourselves, without any proper regard to the design of the institution, is highly deserving of censure; as you make it to be no celebration of the Lord's supper at all, but merely a common meal.

It is for this reason that God has been pleased to visit some of you with sickness, and some with death. But if we examine our own conduct, and thereby perceive and rectify what is amiss in it, we shall not be exposed to the judgments of God. All his judgments have for their object the reformation of those who are exposed to them, that we be not finally condemned with a sinful world. Let me exhort you, therefore, when you again meet for the purpose of administering the Lord's supper, to wait for one another, and if any person have occasion to eat for refreshment, let him do it at his own house, that in your public assemblies you may behave in a more decent and proper manner: As to other particulars which have been improperly conducted among you, I will rectify them when I come.

Ch. XII. 1. One cause of pride and emulation among the christians at Corinth was the possession of supernatural gifts which appears to have been imparted, tho' in different degrees, to all the christian converts in that early age. But the apostle observes, that the diversity of these gifts should be an argument for their union, and not a subject of contention; since, tho' various, they all proceeded from the same spirit, and were subservient to the same end.

3 These

8. These gifts were not imparted to any heathens, but were peculiar to christians.

5. Different offices in the christian church.

6. Different modes in which the same spirit of God operated.

8. It is not easy to distinguish between what the apostle calls the *word of wisdom*, and that of *knowledge*. The former is generally supposed to mean that superior and more comprehensive knowledge of christianity which was given to the apostles, and a few others ; and the latter skill in interpreting the scriptures. But perhaps the apostle did not attend to any nice distinction, tho' he used different terms.

23. By covering and clothing them with more care.

27. The whole of this representation furnishes an excellent argument for mutual love and affection. We are all members of the same body, and should therefore feel for each other.

39. viz. Something of more value than any miraculous gift, tho' within the reach of all, meaning love and affection, on which he enlarges in the next chapter.

THE PARAPHRASE.

With respect to spiritual gifts, which is one subject of emulation and contention among you, you are to consider that while you were heathens you were entirely destitute of them, so that your endowment with them is altogether the gift of God, for the confirmation of the gospel. No person, therefore, who is possessed of them
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can blaspheme Christ; and no person can acknowledge Christ, and give this proof of his mission, but by this spirit. They are, therefore, peculiar to christians. And tho' there is a great variety in these gifts, they all proceed from the same spirit of God; as, tho' there are different offices in the christian church, they are all subservient to the head of the church, Jesus Christ.

These gifts are exerted in different manners, but the proper agent in them all is the same God; and they are bestowed not to be the occasion of pride in the possessor, but for the edification of the church. To some are given different kinds and degrees of knowledge; to others great strength of faith, by which miracles are wrought, and of these there are different kinds; as to some that of healing the sick, and to others miracles of another kind. Some are enabled to deliver prophecies, others to distinguish the characters of men. Some speak in unknown languages, which they had not learned, and others interpret what is delivered in those languages. But they are the gifts of the same spirit of God, who imparts to all as he judges best, and they are all subservient to the same purpose. For as the natural body has many members, so has the body of Christ. In whatever respects we differ from one another, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, masters or slaves, if we be alike christians, we may be said to partake of the same spirit.

No one member is the whole body, or independent of the rest. The foot, the ear, the eye, have all their separate functions, and are necessary to each other, as parts of the same body. And even those members that
are

are the least considerable are yet necessary, and those parts that are least honourable, we are more careful to cover with decent cloathing, of which the more honourable parts, as the face and hands, have no need. This is by the providence of God, that no part should be neglected, or have a separate interest from the whole, but be useful to each other. Accordingly, there is a sympathy in all the parts of the same body ; so that if one part be in pain, all the rest suffer with it, and if one part be happy, the rest are so too.

Now, in like manner, all christians are members of one body of Christ, notwithstanding their different qualifications and appointments. In the first rank are the apostles, then prophets, then those who work the greater miracles, then those who heal the sick, those who accompany the apostles, and assist them in preaching the gospel, those who direct the affairs of particular churches, and those who speak in unknown tongues, of which I make the least account. But all are not apostles, or prophets, or possessed of these particular gifts. It is, no doubt, desirable to have them, and therefore commendable to wish for them ; but I shall now proceed to point out to you something still more worthy of your cultivation, viz mutual good will and charity.

Ch. XIII. Having just before observed that there was something of more value than any spiritual gifts, the apostle here enlarges in praise of *charity*, or *benevolence*, and he does it in the manner of the Grecian declaimers, of which the Corinthians were great admirers ; perhaps to shew them that he could be as eloquent as their teachers, if he chose it. In the whole there is
a secret

a secret allusion to the jealousy, boasting, and other things that were censurable, in the Gnostic teachers.

1. The apostle mentions such things as give the most unmeaning sounds, incapable of modulation. For a piece of brass, or a cymbal, could give only one note, and the gift of tongues, in itself considered, he represents as of no more value than they.

3. According to some MSS. it is, *tho' I give up my body so as to have cause of boasting*. Burning alive was no punishment in the apostle's times. W.

No merely external act, how extraordinary soever in itself, will avail in the sight of God, without a principle of real good will, which is seated in the heart. It is not the action, but the motive from which it proceeds, that gives value to any thing in a moral light.

4. Here we have a rhetorical enumeration of the principal properties of *charity*, by which we see that it is by no means what in common language we mean by that term, but a principle of benevolence and candour, a disposition to think the best we can of every person, and to do them all the good offices in our power.

8. The excellence of charity appears in its being permanent ; whereas spiritual gifts answered only a temporary purpose.

12. Objects seen by reflected light cannot possibly appear so luminous as if seen directly. In the most perfect mirrors about half the light being lost, and much more than this in those of the ancients, which were generally made of brass, and reflected objects very obscurely.

13. To

13. To shew the excellency of charity in a stronger light the apostle represents it as superior in value even to the virtues of faith, and hope. It is, indeed, the foundation, or the essence of every moral quality. For, as he elsewhere observes, *all the law is fulfilled in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

THE PARAPHRASE.

I observed that there was something of more real value than any of the spiritual gifts on which you value yourselves so much. I meant charity, or benevolence. As to the gift of tongues, tho' I could speak all the languages of men, and even that of angels, if I had not this benevolence, or good will to men, I might as well make such an unmeaning sound as that of a piece of brass, or a cymbal. Tho' I could foretell future events, and understood all mysteries, and knew all that man can know; tho' I had faith sufficient to remove mountains, yet without charity it would be of no avail to me: Yea, tho' I should have other virtues, tho' I should give all my property to the poor, and even have the resolution to be burned alive for my religion, it would signify nothing without charity.

The properties of this charity are the following—It bears patiently the weakness of others, and is always disposed to do good, it excludes all envy and boasting, and it necessarily produces, or implies, the presence of every other virtue.

The superior excellence of charity farther appears by its being of a permanent nature. The gifts of the
spirit

spirit are only of temporary use. Even our knowledge here is very imperfect, and in a future state will give place to superior light. It is like the knowledge of a child compared to that of a man. What we know at present is, as it were, by a faint light, reflected from a mirror; but we shall hereafter see, without such an obstructing medium, as we now see one another, by direct intuition. There are three things of real value, faith, hope, and charity; but of these the most important and valuable is charity.

Ch. XIV. The apostle having recommended the cultivation of charity, or good will to others, in preference to any miraculous gifts, enlarges on the relative uses of the different qualifications of the members of christian societies, and gives various directions for their conduct in their religious assemblies.

1. The word here used signifies to pursue with eagerness. The meaning therefore is, make charity, or brotherly love your first object tho' there be nothing improper in desiring to be possessed of spiritual gifts.

It having been the duty of the ancient prophets to exhort the people as well as to foretel future events, the term prophecy has often the former sense in the New Testament, thus in this place it means some edifying discourse.

2. If none who were present understood the language in which a person spoke it could not be of any use, but the apostle might suppose that the greater part of the audience might not understand it. In that case a man might speak to the purpose and even something of great

great depth and moment, but what was known only to himself and to God.

6. By revelation may be meant informing them of what they were ignorant. Knowledge may signify the knowledge of the scriptures. Prophecy in this place may perhaps mean the foretelling of future events, and doctrine a moral discourse. But it is of no great consequence whether we be able to ascertain the precise meaning of all these terms or not, or whether we suppose that the apostle himself used them with any accurate distinction.

11. The term barbarian is often used to signify, not what we now mean by the term, that is, a person who is rude and unpolished in his manners, brutish in his temper, or cruel in his conduct, but merely a foreigner. The Greeks called all those barbarians who were not of their own nation, and who did not speak their language.

13. i. e. Be able not only to interpret in his own language what he had himself been speaking, and therefore knew the meaning of, but what was spoken in any other language that might not be understood by those who were present.

It is evident there was some difference between the gift of tongues and that of the interpretation of tongues, tho' it is not easy to determine in what it consisted. As they are both called gifts it should seem that they are both of them miraculous, and it could be no miracle to speak in a man's own tongue what he had himself just before expressed in another, if he understood the meaning of the words which he first delivered, and it seems

harsh to suppose that he should not, tho' it would no doubt, answer the same purpose of a miracle for a man to speak intelligibly in a language not understood by himself, but only by the hearers.

14. Here the spirit means spiritual gifts, and the apostle as it were says, I exercise my own spiritual gifts but without contributing to the rational devotion of others.

16. i. e. Give thanks or pray.

20. Here the apostle represents the mere speaking with tongues and other miraculous gifts, in which the Corinthians prided themselves, as inferior to those gifts or qualifications by which their mutual edification was promoted, and the distinction in what we should be children, and in what we should be men, is observed, tho' not necessary to his present purpose.

21. The passages to which the apostle here alludes are probably Deut. xx, 40. Isai. xxviii, 11, and Jer. v, 15; in which God threatens the Jews with an enemy that should speak a language which they understood not, since they did not hearken to him speaking to them in a language which they did understand. The application therefore of these passages by the apostle, is not agreeable to their original signification, but in such a manner as might serve to shew that these Corinthians had no reason to pride themselves in a circumstance which God had formerly made use of as a punishment.

22. We here see the great use of the gift of tongues, and of spiritual gifts in general. They were an evidence

dence of the power of God accompanying the preaching of the gospel.

24. i. e. They all spake to his conviction as if they had sat in judgment upon him, his own conscience acquiescing in what they said.

25. They who spake might be directed to say what a stranger knew could not be known to them in a natural way; as our Saviour did with respect to Nathaniel, and the woman of Samaria.

27. i. e. Let not more than this number speak at any one meeting of the church, and let them speak in order, without interrupting one another.

28. This must go upon the idea that the person who spake in the unknown tongue could not interpret what he had said, at least to all the audience.

29. Here prophecy can only mean exhortation, for if these persons spake by a properly divine impulse, it would have been impious to censure what they said, though judging may be meant, judging whether a man spake by divine impulse or not.

30. This should have been rendered, let the former have done speaking; not that any person should interrupt him before he had done, which is what our present translation implies.

32. When the heathens pretended to speak by divine impulse, they had not, or pretended not to have, any command of themselves, but were, or seemed to be, in a kind of phrenzy; whereas these christian prophets were masters of themselves, and spake with perfect composure.

35. From the apostle's express prohibition of women speaking at all in public assemblies, as a thing indecent in itself, it should seem that when he before re-proved them for speaking with their heads uncovered, he did not mean that it would be proper for them to speak even with their heads covered, but only that when they had spoken, it should have been at least in a more decent manner, reserving his censure with respect to their speaking at all, to this place.

36. That is, are you the only church of christians, that you should pay no regard to the rules observed in other churches?

38. That is, having said what was sufficient for conviction, so that nothing more could be done.

But whosoever does not acknowledge this, let him be unknown, i. e. as a spiritual person. W.

40. How strangely has this passage been abused, when it has been applied to enforce the rules or orders of established churches against all sectaries, who merely follow the dictates of their own consciences in matters of religion, when the apostle is only recommending decency in conducting public assemblies, with a view to nothing more than such irregularities as he is reprehending in this epistle.

Ch. XV. This chapter is one of the most important parts of the New Testament, and indeed of the scriptures in general, as we learn from it so particular an account of the greatest article of christian faith, and the foundation of all our hopes, viz. the doctrine of the resurrection. This doctrine the new teachers at Corinth explained away, saying, that what the apostles called a resurrection

resurrection was something that took place in this life, meaning probably that life of righteousness which follows what the apostle sometimes calls the death of sin, taking advantage of his figurative language.

The doctrine of the resurrection we know appeared so extraordinary to the heathens, who had never heard of such a thing before, that it was generally laughed at by them, as by Paul's audience at Athens, and therefore philosophical persons would naturally give any other meaning rather than the literal one. It is remarkable, however, that these christians at Corinth who denied the general resurrection, did not deny the resurrection of Christ, for the apostle argues from this fact in proof of a general resurrection. The resurrection of Christ they might consider as a miracle, respecting himself personally, and a proof of his own divine mission only.

That any christian should deny the resurrection, would hardly be credited by us now, if it had not been well known that there were great numbers of christians after the apostolical age who denied it likewise. They held other tenets which are animadverted upon by the apostles, and from which it is evident that they were the same kind of people who were afterwards called Gnostics. It was a fundamental principle with them that all evil arose from matter. They therefore thought it an advantage to the soul to be freed from the clog of the body, and many of them thought that Christ himself had no body like our's, but only the appearance of one. This opinion the apostle John strongly reprobates.

3! These three verses I would paraphrase as follows.—As your new teachers have very much perverted the gospel, it is necessary for me to inform you distinctly concerning the fundamental principles of it, as I first preached them to you, which is the only foundation upon which your faith can stand, and by your obedience to which you can render yourselves acceptable to God. These are the principles that you must retain, unless your profession of christianity be of no avail to you. Now the great fundamental doctrine of christianity, is the belief that Christ died in consequence of the sins of others, and not his own, that his death was foretold in the scriptures, and that after he was buried, he rose again on the third day.

By the scriptures, must here be meant the scriptures, or prophecies, of the Old Testament. In them, however, there is no clear intimation of the Messiah rising from the dead on the third day, but only of his humiliation, sufferings, and death, previous to his glorious exaltation, which of course implies a resurrection. However, all the great articles relating to Christ being foretold in the scriptures, was sufficient for the apostle's general argument, and to critical exactness he does not seem to have much attended.

7. Here the appearances to Mary Magdalen, and to the two disciples walking to Emmaus, are not mentioned, but that to James in particular is noticed here only, and the occasion of it, as well as of that to Peter, is unknown to us, tho' no doubt there must have been a particular propriety in both. Peter would be quite overwhelmed with grief on account of his late denial
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of his master, and this is generally supposed to have been the reason of Christ's appearing so early to him, for it was early on the day on which he rose; but why he should have appeared to James in particular, there is no conjecture worth mentioning.

The apostle mentions the resurrection of Christ, thus clearly proved by testimony, as the fundamental article of the gospel, and the evidence of the fact is, as I have more than once observed, remarkably clear and satisfactory. It is evident that not one of our Lord's disciples expected to see him any more. They were therefore not at all prepossessed in favour of such an event, so as to be imposed upon by any person assuming his character, and besides appearing several times to his disciples when they did not expect him, there was one solemn meeting by previous appointment with his disciples in general, so that being apprized of it, they could each of them take what methods they thought proper in order to satisfy themselves of it's being the same person; and this meeting was in Galilee where he had the greatest number of disciples, and where he was the most known. Five hundred it seems were present, of whom the greater part were living when Paul wrote, which was twenty five years after the event. These appearances were likewise at intervals for the space of forty days, which must have been abundantly sufficient for the most complete satisfaction.

The last appearance to all the apostles must refer to the time of his ascension, which was in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and where he was not accompanied by so many as in Galilee.

8. This appearance to Paul, who was a persecutor of the christians, must have been as satisfactory with respect to the evidence of the fact, as any one appearance that could have been suggested. It is commonly said that Christ appeared to his disciples only, whereas this was an appearance to an enemy, and perhaps the very man that his enemies in general would have pitched upon, if they had had the choice of the person given them, but it could not be expected that after such an appearance he could remain an enemy. Had Christ in like manner appeared to all his enemies, and in consequence of it the Jews in general had become christians, the history would not have been so credible as it is at this day. Hence appears the wisdom of God in the general incredulity of the Jews of that age. It will forever be a proof that christianity was no scheme favoured by the powers of this world, but that it prevailed by its own proper evidence, in spite of all opposition.

12. Whoever were the preachers, the doctrine was the same. This, he says, was what I taught, and what you received from me, viz. that Christ rose from the dead.

13. If the dead in general are not to rise, no reason could be given why Christ in particular should rise again, especially as he rose in proof of his doctrine, the great article of which was a general resurrection. But I must observe that this argument is much weakened by any opinion of Christ being of a nature superior to that of man, for then there might have been reasons
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for his rising again, which would not extend to those who were not more than men.

17. i. e. Subject to death, which was the punishment of sin, without any hope of a resurrection.

18. By the apostle speaking of the dead, as perished, on the supposition of there being no resurrection, it is evident that he had no idea of the separate existence of the soul, independently of the body. For then death would only have been a dismissal of the immortal spirit, which would subsist, and according to the common opinion, be more free and more happy without the body than with it.

19. Not that strictly speaking they were so. It was what the world would pronounce them to be, and what must have been the case in fact, if they had not been conscious of perfect integrity, or they had known that they were conducting an imposture, so that they could have had no hope of happiness hereafter, to bear them up under the troubles to which they were exposed here.

The phrase *for the dead* may mean *in the place of those that are dead*. A Greek writer uses it in this sense, when he speaks of fresh soldiers raised to supply the place of those that had been slain.

20. It is evident from this that the resurrection of Christ is not merely to be considered as a miracle in proof of his doctrine, the principal article of which was the resurrection of all the dead, but a specimen, as it were, of this general resurrection; he being the first fruits of a general harvest, he being the first who after having been dead rose again to immortal life. Enoch and Elijah

Elijah who were translated, never died ; and those whom Christ and the apostles raised to life died again ; but Christ after being dead rose to immortal life as the first fruits of a general resurrection. But Christ could not be properly called the first fruits of those who are to rise from the dead, if he was not of the same nature with those of whom that general harvest is to consist. In the law of Moses, the first fruits was only the first ripe corn gathered before the rest. Christ, therefore, must be of the same nature with us, in order to be the first fruits from the dead, and that his resurrection may be a proper encouragement to us to expect the like. Had he been of a nature considerably different from ours, especially much superior to us, as he must have been if he had been the creator of the world, and of man, his rising again would be no proper specimen of a resurrection, in which we might hope to partake, for there might be very good reasons why so great a being as he was, could not be holden of death, which would not at all extend to us.

22. Here the apostle evidently considers Christ as a mere man, as much as Adam was ; death being introduced by one man and eternal life by another.

23. The second coming of Christ, and the general resurrection we here see are to take place together.

24. According to the Ethiopic version, it is, *When God the Father delivers up the kingdom to him. W.*

28. There is some difficulty in the construction of this passage, viz. whether the proper kingdom of Christ is to have an end when God shall have subdued all things under

under him ; or whether it shall then only be so completed as to be fully established, and therefore more properly to commence. The former I think the more natural interpretation of the two ; so that when all the dispensations of God with respect to mankind shall be terminated at the general resurrection, the office of Christ will expire, nothing that we know of remaining for him as the Messiah to do. But whether this be so or not, it is evident that as the kingdom of Christ was given him by God, who put all things under him, so it is always subordinate to him. God therefore is supreme, and Christ only his servant, and the instrument in his hands.

29. There are many interpretations of this passage, but I think the most probable is, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, they who are baptized into the christian religion, which then exposed men to persecution and death, might be said to be baptized into death, that being the end and the only consequence of their faith ; and this seems to be confirmed by what follows, which relates to the hardships to which the profession of christianity exposed them.

Mr. W. thus renders it, *What advantage over the other dead will they have who are submitting constantly to baptism ?* The last clause, *for the dead*, is not acknowledged in the Coptic or Ethiopic versions.

31. The rejoicing which I have on your account.

According to the Ethiopic version it is, *I die daily in consequence of the boastful confidence which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.* W.

32. Here the apostle probably alludes to the opposition which he had met with at Ephesus, from rude and violent men, here termed beasts. Had he actually fought with wild beasts, or been exposed to them, it was a thing so singular in its kind, that it would hardly have failed to have been noticed by Luke, who wrote the history of Paul, and who was probably with him at the time. Besides, the Romans had not then begun to persecute the christians, and exposing to wild beasts was a Roman punishment. All that the heathens had done against the christians at the time of Paul's writing this epistle, consisted of various ill offices, at the instigation of the Jews, who had considerable influence in most cities of the empire; but it does not appear that at this time it had extended to such a punishment as this.

As far as a man could, or humanly speaking, *I did fight*. I was very near being exposed on the stage for that purpose. W.

It is evident from this passage that the apostle had no idea of any hope after death, but upon the doctrine of a resurrection. In all his writings he never mentions or alludes to any state of consciousness between death and the resurrection, not even when he is comforting christians on the death of their deceased friends, on which occasion it was in a manner unavoidable, and indeed it never was, or could be, overlooked by any person who really believed it. Here he says, if the dead rise not, all ends with this life, and therefore we may as well make the most of it. But this inference would be by no means just, if happiness or misery await-

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ed the souls of men after death, tho' there should be no resurrection of the body.

34. Here the apostle alludes to some corrupt practices to which the new teachers at Corinth were addicted, and they were probably the same set of persons, who were so severely censured by Peter, Jude and John, and who are also alluded to in the book of revelation, and as immoral practices are universally laid to the charge of the Gnostics, whether justly or not, in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles, it is probable that these men were of the same class.

In this part of the chapter the apostle replies to the objections which were made to the doctrine of a resurrection, both by the Gnostic teachers, and likewise by the philosophizing Greeks, with whom the christians at Corinth must have had intercourse, and who, no doubt, as well as the philosophers at Athens, considered this doctrine as absolutely incredible. Indeed, to persons, who had never heard of such a thing before, it must necessarily have appeared in the highest degree improbable, because it is contrary to any analogy, at least to any apparent analogy in nature, since we see nothing like it take place at present.

For this reason, no doubt, a thing of so much consequence, and on which alone, according to the system of revelation, our future existence depends, has been attended with such abundant evidence, and of such a nature, as when sufficiently attended to, is best calculated to impress the minds of men, having not only the solemn attestation of persons commissioned by God to teach

teach that doctrine, and who proved their commission by doing such things as God only could empower them to do ; but having been exemplified in several instances of persons being actually raised to life ; and what is still more to the purpose, our Saviour himself submitted to die in the most public, and therefore the most indisputable manner, and rose again to the perfect satisfaction of several hundreds of persons, who knew him before, and who had no expectation of any such event.

The resurrection of the dead, cannot be said to require more power than was equal to the original formation of man and of the universe. The thing therefore, not being in itself impossible, is capable of proof, and in its own nature no evidence can be stronger than that of the resurrection of Christ.

Had any person, the most incredulous in the world, been asked, what proof he would require of a resurrection, he could only say to the preacher of that doctrine, let me see you raise some person from the dead, and do you die yourself and rise again, and then we will believe you. Now this very thing has been done, and the history of it is as credible as any ancient history whatever. Nay, I have shewn from several considerations, that the resurrection of Christ, is even better attested than any other fact in history, but its superior importance required this superior evidence.

35. This objection arises, as appears from the apostle's answer, from the dispersed state of all the elements
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of a dead body, as if they had said, how is it possible that the dead should come to life again. What is there left of the body that can be revived?

38. By paraphrasing these verses, as I shall endeavour to do, the difficulty attending the apostle's argument, as far as it was intended to be an argument, may perhaps be removed. Let us suppose then, the apostle addressing them as follows.

The objection that you make to the possibility of a resurrection, on account of the state of death, and the corruption that follows it, is weak and easily answered. For a state of corruption and total dissolution, at least to appearance, takes place with respect to every seed that is committed to the ground, and which afterwards reproduces its likeness. Antecedent to any experiment or observation on the subject, no person could have concluded, that a grain of any kind would produce any plant at all, and much less always one of the same kind, and yet God has so ordered things in the frame of nature, that every seed committed to the ground in proper circumstances should not only not perish, but produce another plant bearing a seed like itself. In like manner, for any thing that we know to the contrary, it may be a law of nature, not only that a man committed to the earth, should not finally perish, but that in due time another person should arise, as much the same with him that died, and as distinguishable from every other individual of the human race, as the wheat that is reaped resembles that which was sown, and no other kind of grain.

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The comparison is not to be supposed to apply throughout, as if the apostle intended to say, that by a law of nature, similar to that of the reproduction of seeds from seeds, a dead man should produce a living one. For the cases are remarkably different, there being an apparent living principle, or germ, in every seed, the expansion of which makes the future plant ; so that if the whole seed should ever become putrid, and the parts of which it consists be dispersed, no other plant or seed could be produced from it. But as antecedent to experience we could not have known this, but should rather have imagined that a seed buried in the ground would be absolutely lost ; so, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, a similar event may take place with respect to a man, so that tho' he be buried, the time may come when he will appear again.

44. It was an opinion of the Jews that men would rise again with the same kind of bodies that they now have, so that of course they would have the same wants, and be capable of the same gratifications. Hence the difficulty that the Pharisees were under in answering the objections of the Sadducees about the woman married to several husbands. But the apostle shews that, tho' it may be said to be in some sense the same body that rises again, it may be in other respects exceedingly different, having properties much superior to those of which it was possessed before. In this case they may be so different, that whereas the present body is called natural, or animal, the future may be termed spiritual, being something as much more excellent than the present

sent corruptible body, as the mind of man is superior to the rest of his composition.

45. It is evident, that the apostle here speaks of the life of which Adam became possessed in consequence of God's breathing into him, what Moses calls the breath of life, as nothing more than what we call animal life, such as the brutes are possessed of, who are likewise said by Moses to have living souls as well as men; that is, it was such a life as should have an end. It is evident, therefore, that he had no view to any immaterial principle infused into man; for then, as brutes are described in the same manner, they must be possessed of an immaterial principle too. But Christ who is here called the last Adam, being originally as much a man as the first Adam, became after his resurrection a being no more liable to corruption or death. This the apostle, not knowing how else to characterize it, calls in opposition to the present animal body, a spirit endued with a principle of immortal life, and moreover as the words literally imply, having a power of imparting it to others.

47. i. e. He will come down from heaven, so that then he may be said to have a different origin from that which Adam, or himself, had before.

50. i. e. Such bodies as we now have, which by their constitution are liable to corruption and death, cannot be those that are fitted for a state of incorruption and immortality. They must, therefore be essentially changed, in order to be adapted to their future condition.

51. Here the word mystery only means something new, which was not understood before it was discovered, and by no means a thing that could not be comprehended, when it was discovered, or revealed.

53. It is plain, that in the idea of the apostle, it is virtually the same body that rises, tho' with some different properties; and as in every seed there is a part that does not perish in the ground, but appears again in the future plant, so some have supposed that in the human body there may be a similar germ, or stamen, that never perishes, but becomes the principle, or foundation, of a new life. The great mass of our present bodies is well known to be adventitious matter, continually changing; and there is no proof, they say, but that the embryo, which to become a full grown man, is only extended and enlarged by adventitious matter, may remain unchanged through life. This, however, is a speculation with which, as christians, and not as philosophers, we have no concern. It is enough for us to be informed by the great being who made us, that whether our future bodies contain any of the particles of which they now consist, or not, we shall be so far the same that we shall have a perfect recollection of our present consciousness, and a perfect recollection of our present friends and acquaintances.

54. i. e. Completely and forever swallowed up, or put an end to. The allusion is to Isaiah xxv, 8, in which the prophet declares in a figurative manner that God would never more utterly disperse or destroy his people, but that they would continue in their own land to the end of time.

56. i. e. Death being the consequence of sin, is here described as a peston, which could have no power over us but by means of sin, as there could be no sin without a law, of which sin is the transgression.

58. Here we see the great distinguishing doctrine of the gospel, viz. that of a resurrection of the dead; and a future life of retribution, together with the moral influence of this doctrine, as it leads to a life of sobriety and virtue; this being the only way to obtain a happy resurrection. And infinitely better will it be for us not to believe in a future life at all, than believing it, to live as if there were none.

Ch. XVI. The apostle having written so much at large concerning the doctrine of a resurrection, and every other other subject on which he had occasion to admonish the christians at Corinth, closes the epistle with noticing some other particulars in a brief way, and informing them concerning his own situation and his intention with respect to visiting them.

1. This epistle was written in the year fifty six, when the apostle was at Ephesus; and as he intended soon to return to Jerusalem, he proposed to collect what assistance he could for the poor christians there, from their more opulent Gentile brethren; and in the second year after his writing this epistle, he did return to Jerusalem with that collection.

2. It appears from this passage, as well as from other circumstances, that in the time of the apostles it was the custom of christians to hold their public assemblies on the first day of the week, which very soon got the appellation of the Lord's day, from Christ's having

risen from the dead on that day. It was likewise the custom in all the early times, to make a collection of money, every time that they met for public worship. A part of this common fund, or stock, was employed in maintaining their ministers; and another, and this a very considerable part, was appropriated to the poor.

The expression, laying by him, here evidently means, not what some have supposed, a setting a part at home what each person intended to give, but bringing it to the common stock. Otherwise the collection would still have been to make after the apostle's arrival.

4. *If it be worthy of my going also*, intimating, that if the collection was considerable, he would take it to Jerusalem himself. W.

5. It appears that the apostle visited Macedonia before he went to Corinth, and it was from Macedonia that he wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, before he arrived there himself.

7. i. e. He would not call at Corinth on his way to some other place, but he would make his visit to them a principal object.

9. Some think that here is an allusion to the custom of the chariot races in the Roman circus. Whatever the allusion be, the meaning is, that the apostle had a great prospect of preaching the gospel with success at Ephesus, where he then was, notwithstanding there were many to oppose him, as we find by the great tumult at that place about this time, of which we have an account in the book of Acts, and which is supposed to have hastened his departure from that city.

11 Timothy

11 Timothy appears to have been a young man, and to stand in need of encouragement. He was a native of Lystra, and had accompanied Paul from the first of his preaching the gospel in that place. His residence was chiefly at Ephesus, and there he was when the apostle wrote to him from Macedonia, soon after his leaving that place, and this will be the next epistle of Paul of which I shall give an account.

12. Apollos was a Jew of Alexandria, who on his coming to Ephesus was instructed in the gospel by Aquila and Priscilla, who were Jews that had been driven from Rome by the emperor Claudius. He was an eloquent man, and appears to have been so popular at Corinth, that some persons called themselves his disciples, as Paul says some are of Apollos. It is possible that on this account Paul might decline going thither at this time.

The apostle now proceeds to close his epistle with sending salutations to and from particular persons; but before he enters upon them, he gives the Corinthians some general exhortations to a vigilance and constancy, in a few animating words.

19. Probably they had a large family of christian members, so as to be called a church by itself.

21. This and the remaining verses were written by Paul himself, the former part being written by amanuensis. In his epistle to the Thessalonians he had observed that he should sign all his epistles with his own hand, in order, as it should seem, to prevent any person counterfeiting letters from him.

22. Anathema is a solemn curse among the Jews, and maran-atha signifies, in the Syriac language, the Lord comes. The apostle's pronouncing this anathema seems to be an allusion to the custom of the Jews, who when they could not execute the sentence of their law, nevertheless pronounced it with a reference to the judgment of God. So Paul intimates by this, that if the new teachers at Corinth, who perverted the gospel, and undermined his authority, were only pretended christians, they would receive their proper punishment when Christ should come at the last day.

23. i. e. All the blessings of the gospel.

NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO

TIMOTHY.

IT appeared from the first epistle to the Corinthians, that when Paul wrote it he was at Ephesus, where he said a great and effectual door was opened unto him, tho' he had many adversaries. At this time he had spent more than two years in that city, and Timothy who was of Lystra, and who had attended Paul in his first progress to preach the gospel in Greece, had been with him there, but had been sent by him into Macedonia along with Erastus as we read Acts xix. 22. It appears also from 1 Cor. xvi, 10. that he was to proceed

ceeded to Corinth, and it is probable that he had returned to Ephesus before Paul left that place which was A. D. 56.

Not long after this Paul left Ephesus, which the tumult excited by the Silversmiths and Demetrius had probably hastened, and either from Macedonia, Troas, or some other stage, in his way thither he wrote this epistle to Timothy. From his writing so soon after leaving that place, and also from the tenor of the epistle itself, it is evident that he had much anxiety about the state of the church at Ephesus, on account of the opposition which he had met with there: and it appears to have been of the same nature with that which he had experienced at Corinth, viz. from persons pretending to learning and philosophy, who adulterated the gospel with a mixture of opinions which they had held before, despised the plain preaching of the apostle, and undervalued his authority. It will be seen, that there must have been persons who held the opinions which I have told you constituted the system of Gnosticism, the fundamental articles of which I have already explained, and shall have occasion to do it farther in my account of this epistle to Timothy.

1. Paul having enemies at Ephesus as well as at Corinth, thought proper to begin his epistle to Timothy, which was in effect an epistle to the christians at that place, with a certain apostolical authority, as derived immediately from Christ himself.

i. e. Whose doctrine is the foundation of our hope.

2. Timothy had probably been converted to christi-

L 4 anity

anity by Paul himself, and on this account he might call him his own son.

4. It is evident that most of the opposers of Paul both in Galatia, Corinth, and Ephesus, were Jews, who boasted of the law. But they seem withal to have been persons who had adopted the principles of the oriental philosophy, holding matter and the body in great contempt, and explaining away the doctrine of the resurrection. After the age of the apostles, there arose a sect of philosophizing christians, who despised the law of Moses, and thought that the author of it was not that God who is the father of Jesus Christ, but some inferior and malevolent being.

What the genealogies here mentioned were, is not easy to say. If they were mere Jews who boasted of them, they were probably those by which they proved their descent from Abraham and the heads of their respective tribes; but such genealogies as these will hardly be interesting to any besides themselves. The Gnostics of that age had genealogies of a very different nature, relating to the various orders of beings supposed to be derived from the supreme, commonly called *Æons*, or angelic spirits, one of which they made Christ to be. These genealogies were sufficiently intricate, so that there was room for much learning and subtlety in the adjustment of them. I therefore think that the foundation of this system was laid in the time of the apostles, and that these were the genealogies to which Paul here alludes.

5. Mr. W. renders *the purpose of thy charge*, viz. that mentioned before, as given by Timothy.

7. These

7. These philosophizing christians, proud of their knowledge, laid more stress upon it than upon the purity of heart and life, which is the end of both the law and the gospel.

8. Left it should be imagined Paul meant to undervalue the law, he expressly declares that that was not his intention, and shews what was the proper end of the law with respect to the moral, which was the most important use of it, namely to be a restraint upon vice and wickedness, several kinds of which he here enumerates.

15. Paul having represented himself as a great sinner, tho' he had acted in one sense conscientiously in what he had done, but without having taken proper pains to inform his judgment, which is the natural guide of conscience, takes the opportunity of asserting in general, that the design of the gospel which he had embraced was to save sinners, or to reform the world, and this makes it so great a blessing to the world, which stood in great need of reformation.

17. We see that Paul referred all the blessings of the gospel, to God the author of all good, whose servant only, and messenger, Christ was.

18. i. e. The preaching of the gospel.

This must refer to some particular prophecy, pointing out Timothy in particular as a proper person to be intrusted with the preaching of the gospel, and it is evident from other circumstances that such a spirit of prophecy was in the church.

Mr. W. renders *this charge*, viz. as given him by Paul, and not *any prediction*.

20. This Hymeneus Paul says 2 Tim. ii. 17, had together with Philetus overturned the faith of some, saying, that the resurrection was past already. Of Alexander he says in the same place that he had done him much evil, probably by joining these persons in teaching the same doctrine, which was evidently the same with that of the Gnostics at Corinth, who likewise denied the resurrection. These persons being obstinate in opposing the gospel, it seems that the apostle had excommunicated them, which he expresses by saying they were delivered over to Satan. Satan denoting the principal of evil in general, we can only infer from this phrase that some judgment or other, probably of a temporal and visible nature, did then attend these solemn excommunications, which in the infant state of the church served as a warning to others, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and tho' the punishments here alluded to might not be so awful, yet the hand of God might be as conspicuous in them.

Ch. II. The apostle having asserted his apostolical authority, and given some account of his former life, and of the goodness of God in calling him to the apostleship, proceeds to give Timothy a variety of directions with respect to the church at Ephesus, to the state of which he is perpetually alluding: and it will be a great key to his meaning to consider that there were in that church, as in that of Corinth, persons who undervalued his authority, and held principles inconsistent with those of christianity, being those of the Gnostics which I have so often mentioned, and who being at the same time Jews, had prejudices peculiar to that nation.

2. It is possible that the Jews of that age held other nations in such great contempt and abhorrence, especially the Romans who ruled over them, that they would not publicly pray for them.

4. i. e. Who does not confine his goodness to the Jews, but intends the gospel to be a blessing to all nations without distinction ; for that is the meaning of the apostle in this place, and not the salvation of each individual of mankind, tho' this may be implied in other passages of scripture.

5. For God and Christ bearing the same relation to Jews and Gentiles, there can be no respect of persons with them.

Here the apostle, without making it his principal object, for he could have no idea of that being necessary, evidently considers the one God as a Being quite distinct from Jesus Christ : and speaking here of Christ in his highest capacity, as the great mediator between God and man, or the person whose doctrine was calculated to reconcile them when they were at variance, he nevertheless simply calls him a man. Had the apostle thought him to be a being of a higher nature than that of man, it cannot be supposed but that in this place more especially, he would have denominated him by that higher rank whatever it was ; and especially if he had conceived him to be so great a being as the maker of man and of all things. There must have been a manifest impropriety in calling that being simply a man, who was naturally superior to angels.

6. Christ in consequence of delivering men from sin and death by his gospel, and dying in order to effect this

this great purpose, may be considered in a figurative sense as giving his life for them ; and this the apostle observes that he did without any distinction of Jews or Gentiles. For he alludes to the narrow principles of the Jews in the whole of this argument.

7. i. e. It is an undoubted truth, tho' some at Ephesus may question it.

As an apostle, it is my direction that prayer be made for all men, with a disposition of mind proper to recommend all prayer ; and especially without a spirit of contention, debating, or wrangling, as the word may be rendered ; and this makes the better sense, as the apostle is here alluding to the factious spirit which prevailed both here and at Corinth.

Having given the preceding direction concerning prayer for the Roman emperors and all persons without distinction, he proceeds to another subject which it is probable that the state of the church at Ephesus might render expedient.

10. They were not to consider these things as their principal ornament, for I do not suppose that the apostle meant absolutely to forbid every thing that is considered as ornament in dress.

Having thus mentioned the case of women, he proceeds to give the same directions respecting their conduct in the church at Ephesus, which he had done with regard to the church at Corinth, viz. that they should not speak in the public assemblies of christians.

12. i. e. Over the man, which their public teaching would imply.

14. He mentions these circumstances which seem to be of no great moment, as what in his opinion prove the subordination of women to men. But the unsuitableness of speaking in public to the female character, of which modesty and reserve is the greatest recommendation, would have been a reason quite sufficient for his purpose.

15. There is great difficulty in the interpretation of this passage. It expresses in general the respect that God bears to the female sex, as well as to the male; tho' women were in a state of subjection to men, and it was unbecoming in their character to assume a superiority over them by speaking in public assemblies. It is possible that in speaking of child-bearing, the apostle might allude to the Mosaic account of the creation, in which the pains attending it are mentioned as a curse upon Eve; intimating that notwithstanding this circumstance, women were in a state of favour with God. He might also allude to the opinions of the Gnostics who were enemies to marriage.

Ch. III. It seems probable, that Paul did not appoint any regular officers in the church of Ephesus, while he continued there, but perhaps intended to have done it, when he was obliged to leave the place rather abruptly. This business seems to have been left to Timothy, to whom in this chapter he gives instructions on the subject; giving him an idea in the first place, of the importance of the office of bishop or principal overseer of a christian church; and then, the proper qualifications for the discharging of it, as well as for the inferior office of deacon.

It

It must be observed, that, the apostle in the regulations he here lays down for christian churches, seems to have followed the plan of the Jewish synagogue, in which the older and more respectable members had the title of elders, superintending the affairs of the congregation in general, assisted by younger persons called deacons. At first, there was no difference in rank or in duty of the elders of the church, but towards the close of the apostolic age or soon after, the title of *bishop* became appropriated to one of them, while the rest retained the former title of elders or presbyters.

I have more than once observed that the office of elder in christian churches, and which has in a manner grown into disuse, is a very useful and important one; and for want of it, many things which might contribute to the edification, and respectable figure of christian societies, are entirely neglected. The minister is generally in too dependent a situation, to do whatever requires much authority, and yet there is no other person, whose duty it is considered to be, and of whom it is expected. I hope however, that things in this respect as well as several others, are beginning to take a better turn among the dissenters.

2. There have been several absurd interpretations of this precept confining a bishop to one wife, many of the ancients concluding that a bishop or minister, must not on any account marry a second time, and the Russians thinking it absolutely necessary that ministers should be married men; so that they cease to be bishops when their wives die. But if we consider the other qualifications of bishops here pointed out, it will be evident, that they

they were intended to be simply, men of respectable characters. Now tho' polygamy was not forbidden in ancient times, it was never considered so reputable as having only one wife. I would also observe, that tho' there is no particular precept against polygamy in the gospel, it is obviously contrary to the general spirit of it, which inculcates temperance and moderation in all our enjoyments, and it is most evidently contrary to the language of providence in making the number of males and females so nearly equal. It being insisted upon by the apostle in this place, that bishops or men of grave and respectable characters should not have more than one wife, is of itself a proof that polygamy was not deemed reputable.

2. In those times and countries in which there were fewer accommodations for travellers than there are with us, the duty of hospitality was of much consequence, and it was particularly necessary that christians, who being a small party, considered each other as brethren, should be helpful to each other in these circumstances. Now a christian upon a journey, and having no acquaintance in any place through which he was passing, would naturally have recourse to the bishop; and in primitive times a part of the church stock was applied to the relief of strangers, as well as to other charitable purposes; the bishops and presbyters being the stewards of that stock.

3. It may seem extraordinary that any mention should be made of any such vices as these, as existing among christians, and as disqualifications for the office of bishop. It certainly shews that the profession of christianity

anity did not immediately and necessarily reform men's conduct; but that this was the work of time. For if there had not been persons of these characters among the first christian converts, it would have been quite unnecessary to make any mention of them. These facts are utterly inconsistent with the idea of any sudden or miraculous change being wrought in the minds of men, when they are said to have been converted. They first change their opinion and profession upon proper evidence, and better principles would at length, when they had time to operate, produce the proper change in their hearts and lives.

These facts likewise demonstrate the low and vicious state of the world in general before the promulgation of christianity. For the christian converts were, in general, of the more decent and well behaved persons in every place, and there are but few persons making profession of any religion of such characters as those at present; it shows how much christianity has contributed to improve the morals of men. Other causes have no doubt concurred, but this has been the principal.

6. i. e. No new convert. Here the word *Devil* signifies accuser, or adversary; alluding to the many persons who are ready to expose the thoughts and the vices of christians, and especially those in more conspicuous stations.

7. That is, the accuser or adversary again.

8. The qualifications for deacons are in fact the same with those of bishops. For next to the bishops they were the most conspicuous members of christian churches, and therefore their character ought to be the
most

most irreproachable, lest the whole society should fall into disgrace.

These two orders of men, viz. bishops and deacons, were in after times called clergy, and the rest of christians laity; and it was imagined that the clergy had peculiar powers communicated to them by the imposition of hands at their ordination; and a peculiar spiritual character being in this manner given to them, it was imagined they could never be divested of it. But these notions were the growth of superstitious times. The word in the Greek from which our word clergy is derived, signifies a chosen people; and in the New Testament it is applied to the whole body of christians, who are called God's chosen or peculiar people. The gospel makes no difference of clergy or laity, except that the former are appointed by the people to promote the interest of the society by instruction, admonition, &c. They have no peculiar character but what the people gave, and which they can therefore divest them of at pleasure.

9. Here the word *mystery* signifies the pure doctrine of the gospel, which they had been taught without instruction.

14. The apostle continues to exhort Timothy to exert himself with all diligence in his station at Ephesus, to consider the importance of the part he had to act, and of the gospel which he was to promote, in opposition to a variety of corruptions, which the apostle here speaking by the spirit of prophecy, forewarns him would be introduced into the church.

15. i. e. In which thou art a pillar or foundation, supporting the truth by thy exertions in defence of it.

16. According to the pointing of some MSS. it may be rendered, *The mystery of godliness is the pillar and foundation of the faith, and without doubt it is great, &c.*

There is little doubt but that the reading which our english translators followed, is a corrupt one; and that instead of the word God, the apostle wrote what we render *who*, saying he who was manifested in the flesh, that is Jesus Christ. However, if the present reading were admitted, nothing could be inferred from the passage in favour of the divinity of Christ. For as the power of God or the Father was manifested in Christ, as he himself said, that the Father within him did the works which he exhibited, the phrase God manifested in the flesh, would only be equivalent to that of the word being made flesh; both of them denoting that the power of God was made manifest in mortal flesh, or operated by a man, the man Christ Jesus.

In this expression, it is also possible the apostle might allude to the same error which is so severely animadverted upon by the apostle John, viz. that of Christ being man only in appearance.

Justified signifies approved: the divine mission of Christ being evidenced by the miraculous gifts of the spirit.

The word that we render *angels*, signifies also messengers; and is therefore probably to be understood of the apostles by whom our Lord was seen after his resurrection, and who were his messengers to preach his doctrine to the world. Or the reference may be, to those

those angels who attended at the sepulchre of Christ, and who told the women that he was risen from the dead.

Preached to the Gentiles. This was one of the greatest mysteries or secrets of the gospel, which the Jews were exceedingly unwilling to receive.

Received into glory. Some refer this not to Christ himself, but to his gospel; that being received in glory, or having had a glorious or successful reception in the world, notwithstanding the opposition that was made to it by all the civil powers.

All the circumstances here enumerated are important articles of christian faith, and are properly called mysteries, because they could not have been known without instruction, either by a direct communication from God, or some miracles which were the object of the senses: The whole verse may be paraphrased as follows.

Great is the doctrine of the gospel, which being unknown for ages, is at length revealed to us; as by it we are informed, that he who was manifested in the flesh, or truly a man, was approved to have a divine mission by the gifts of the spirit; who after his resurrection was unquestionably seen by his apostles, who were his messengers to preach his doctrine in the world to Gentiles as well as Jews; being published for the benefit of the whole world of mankind. And this Jesus whose doctrine is thus published, is now received up into glory at the right hand of God.

Ch. IV. 1. It is evident from this and other epistles of Paul, especially those to the Thessalonians, that there

were in the christian church, prophecies concerning a great corruption of christianity, which was to take place in the latter days ; by which was probably to be understood, the last stage of the Roman empire, mentioned by Daniel in his account of the vision of Nebuchadnezzar.

At what time, or to whom these revelations were made, does not appear ; but they were evidently prior to the visions of John, recorded in the book of Revelation, for that was probably one of the last books of the New Testament. This epistle of Paul however, was clearly prior to it. And with respect to the nature of the corruptions, or the deviations from the true principles of the gospel, the predictions contained in the epistles of Paul are more definite than any of those in the Revelation ; which rather discover the external state of the church, than things of an internal nature, such as the state of particular doctrines.

This is a circumstance which shews the great value of these epistles of Paul, as well as that of the second of Peter, that of Jude, and those of John ; all of which allude to the same thing, and which are best understood by comparing them with one another, and especially with the events ; the great apostacy which they foretold, having been long since completed in the church of Rome, tho' it began in the doctrine of the Gnostics, which existed in the time of the apostles. For it is remarkable, that many of the doctrines of the Gnostics, were afterwards adopted by those who were called catholic christians ; especially the exaltation of the person of Christ to something more than a man, the contempt of the body, and the respect for the soul as a principle distinct from it,

it, and superior to it. This last, is at the bottom of most of the corruptions of the church of Rome; and it was the leading principle of the Gnostics, so; that the apostle very truly said, that the mystery of iniquity did even then work; the fundamental principles of it, being then introduced, and having never been afterwards eradicated. As to the future operation of these principles, and the full extension of them, it is probable that the apostles themselves had no distinct apprehension of it.

Seducing spirits mean deceivers; and by the doctrine of demons may be understood that of spirits, or the souls of dead men; the doctrine concerning which makes one of the most important articles in the corruptions of the church of Rome.

2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy*: that is, imposing upon men with false miracles, with which the church of Rome abounds.

Having their conscience seared with a hot iron: that is persisting in their impositions upon the world, notwithstanding every attempt to reclaim them, which has been the case with the leading members of the church of Rome in all ages, tho' the greater part, no doubt, have been among the deluded, and did not knowingly delude others.

3. The prohibition of the marriage of priests, or the teachers of the gospel, and a notion of the impurity of that state in general, and the preference given to celibacy, are distinguishing articles in the church of Rome, and the foundation of this was laid in the system of the Gnostics, in which the body was considered as a clog to the soul, and all corporeal indulgence was either thought

meanly of, or held to be indifferent. For the doctrine was capable of two opposite applications; the indulgence of the body being either thought below the attention of a spiritual man, and unworthy of him, or not affecting the soul at all; and therefore might be indulged with perfect safety.

The doctrine of fasting, and the abstinence from particular meats at particular times is likewise a distinguishing part of the system of popery, and so particularly pointed out in this place, that it is extraordinary that the prophecy should not have prevented its own accomplishment. Fasting was also much recommended by the Gnostics, as well as celibacy.

I paraphrase these verses as follows.

We are expressly forewarned by the spirit of God, that in the latter times which are now approaching, there will be a great departure from the true principles of the gospel, in consequence of some persons adopting false notions, and then deceiving others; being more especially misled by notions, concerning the souls of dead men; and they will support their notions by false and lying miracles; which they will publish without shame or remorse. They will also treat with contempt the state of matrimony, and affect to mortify the body by fasting and abstaining from particular meats which God has created for the use of men, and which are to be received with thankfulness by christians as well as other persons.

7. Here the apostle probably alludes to the ridiculous genealogies of the Gnostics, who derived various beings of the higher orders from the supreme, and others

thers again from them. This being altogether the work of imagination, there was room for endless difference of opinion upon the subject. He therefore exhorts Timothy, that neglecting these things as unworthy of him, he would apply the whole bent of his mind to such things as led to substantial virtue.

8. Having mentioned exercise in the preceding verse, he seems to have been led by the term he had used, to speak of two kinds of exercise, that of the body, and that of the mind; shewing that the former tho' it has its advantages, is far inferior to the latter. Bodily exercise promotes health, and the enjoyment of this life; but virtue, besides promoting our happiness in this life, prepares us for the enjoyment of the life which is to come.

10. I paraphrase the preceding verses as follows.

The great object of a life of piety, is the happiness of a future state; and this is a truth of great importance, worthy to be universally received with joy. In the firm belief of this, we apostles, undergo both labour and sufferings, confiding in the promise of God, who has assured us of the future rewards of virtue. His benevolence is conspicuous to all men, but more especially to those who believe and obey the gospel of his son. These maxims do you teach with all authority.

12. As the word here rendered *spirit*, generally, if not always, refers to the miraculous gift of the spirit, and we learn from the case of the church at Corinth, that there were abuses in the exercise of those gifts, it is probable, that Paul here exhorts Timothy to make a proper use of them.

By faith we are here to understand fidelity.

13. *Reading*, no doubt in this place means reading the scriptures.

14. Miraculous gifts were usually, at least, conferred by the laying on of the hands of an apostle; and Paul elsewhere speaks of Timothy having received these gifts by the laying on of his hands; but probably the presbyters of the church where they then were, might join with the apostle in praying for Timothy on that occasion, and lay their hands on him also; this being the usual manner in which prayer was made for particular persons.

Mention was made before, of some prophecy concerning Timothy, which probably preceded his receiving any extraordinary gifts. There seems however, to be some confusion in the order of the clauses in this sentence, and perhaps the sense of the whole may be best expressed as follows.—Be careful to make a right use of these miraculous gifts, which in consequence of a preceding prophecy concerning thee, were conferred upon thee by the laying on of my hands, the whole presbytery joining with me in their prayers for thee on that occasion.

16. These advices are very intelligible and peculiarly excellent and important. They shew the necessity of ministers labouring to form their own minds, of their acquiring useful knowledge, and using their utmost endeavours for the improvement of their hearers. The apostle likewise intimates, tho' in a more indirect manner, the value of their labours with respect to the people. And if there be a duty of ministers, there must be

be a corresponding one on the part of the people, and of equal importance. I do not here mean a duty respecting their ministers, but one respecting themselves. If the ministers are to communicate instruction, the people are to receive it, not implicitly, but to give their best attention, and then judge for themselves. With respect to matters of practice, things of infinitely more moment than any speculations, if it be the duty of the minister to exhort, it is that of the people to improve by the word of exhortation.

Ch. V. The apostle continues to give Timothy various directions how to conduct himself with respect to the church at Ephesus, and especially the officers and the poor belonging to it.

1. *Elders* may in this place mean, either the officers of the church, or persons really advanced in years. In like manner, the young men here mentioned, may either mean those who really were young, or the deacons of the church, who in general were younger persons than the elders of it. His advice equally applies to both the cases: Timothy himself being a young man, was to behave with due respect to those who were his superiors in years, tho' not in knowledge or virtue.

3. To *honour*, in this and also in another place in this chapter, means to maintain. The same word has the same signification in other places, and especially in the fifth commandment, where honour thy father and thy mother denotes the duty of maintaining them, when they were unable to provide for themselves.

It is possible that the *widows* here mentioned might have some stated employment in the church, as we read

read not only of deacons, but also of deaconesses in the primitive times ; and they might with great propriety attend to cases of the poor and strangers, especially those of their own sex. But besides this, it appears from the account of the earliest state of the church, in the acts of the apostles, that much attention was given to the poor, and especially to widows ; for we read of the Grecian converts complaining that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of the church's stock. The widows therefore, mentioned in this place, may only mean those who were destitute of any provision. As the word which we render *widows*, likewise signifies *poor*, which was very often their case, those who are here called *widows indeed*, may have been those who were really destitute and in distressing circumstances.

4. *Let them learn* ; i. e. Let their children and nephews learn ; for if widows had children or near relations capable of labour, there was no reason why they should be burdensome to the church.

6. We are not to infer from this that all widows who were old and poor were therefore pious, or that all of them who were young and rich were otherwise ; but it might be more naturally expected that they would be so, and Timothy was to consider their different ages and circumstances, and behave to them accordingly.

It was usual with the Jews, and appears more than once in the New Testament, to express a state of sin by the term death, as our Saviour says, *let the dead bury*

bury their dead; and the apostle speaks of those who were dead in trespasses and sins.

7. i. e. Irreproachable, so as to bring no scandal upon the church.

8. This respects those members of christian societies who had mothers that were widows, and other near relations in circumstances of penury. Even the heathens acknowledged the propriety of fathers and mothers being maintained by their children, or those who were nearest of kin to them.

9. The *number* in this place must mean the list of those who were to be relieved out of the church's stock, and in this infant state of the church, no officers having to appearance been appointed but a very short time before this, it is not probable that there could be a want of many women in any office. It is therefore, the more probable that this was merely a list of poor widows, as proper objects of charity; tho' there seems to be no good reason, why widows who had had only one husband, should have any preference on that account, if their circumstances were equally distressing; whereas if they held any office, the having been the wife of one man might be thought more reputable, and intitle them to more consideration than the having been wife to several. But indeed, any circumstance that made them appear more respectable, whether they were in or out of office, would intitle them to more consideration in all respects.

10. It seems from this circumstance, that particular regard was had to those widows who had been in a state
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of affluence, and who had extended to others that charity of which they now stood in need themselves.

12. As the apostle mentions these widows casting off their first faith, it is evident, that it was not merely their marrying again, of which the apostle expresses his disapprobation, but their marrying unbelievers, by which they were in danger of being induced to abandon the profession of christianity.

Having damnation should have been rendered being condemned, or deserving censure. Maintaining such widows out of the public funds would, therefore, have been improper.

13. Being maintained at the expence of others, and having no proper employment at an age when they were capable of it; this idle improper conduct might naturally be expected from them, and to this the church was to give no encouragement.

14. It is evident from this, that the apostle had no objection to second marriages as such, since he advises them in the case of young widows, rather than they should live idle at the expence of the society.

15. i. e. Have behaved improperly, and abandoned the profession of christianity.

17. It was not expected that all the elders of a church should teach; but notwithstanding this they might be very well employed in attending to the good order of the society. These persons however, would not in general require any assistance from the society. But those who actually gave their time and labour to the church, so as to give little or no attention to any other business, by which

which they might maintain themselves, would have a natural right to a maintenance from those to whom their time and labour were devoted. Here the word honour evidently signifies maintenance.

20. This shews how attentive the early christians were to the good conduct of the members of their societies, and in their situation among unbelievers, it was peculiarly necessary; but it is certainly highly proper even in our circumstances. All christians are to mind not only their own things, but in some measure also the things of others, so as to provoke to love and to good works. It is a bad symptom of the decline of the spirit of religion, when the members of christian societies consider themselves as intirely detached from each other, and feel no interest in their good or bad conduct.

21. This is speaking according to the oriental stile, considering God as a great prince, attended by his angels or ministering servants. As acting under the inspection of this great being, thus magnificently attended, Paul gives this solemn charge to Timothy.

22. i. e. Do not ordain any person to an office in a christian church, without duly considering his qualifications, lest you should make yourself answerable for his misconduct.

23. This little circumstance shews the apostle's character in a pleasing light, as attentive to the health and comfort of his friend and fellow labourer, but it certainly gives us no idea of his writing from any supernatural inspiration; for this could not be necessary, for one man to give his advice to another. As this has

no connection with either what goes before or what follows, and indeed interrupts the course of the apostle's exhortation, some think, and probably enough, that he wrote it in the margin of his letter, after it was finished, and that it was afterwards taken into the text, and in an improper place.

24. i. e. Some men's faults are conspicuous to all, but those of others are not discovered so soon.

25. i. e. They cannot escape a diligent search.

Ch. VI. The apostle now closes his epistle with a variety of miscellaneous directions and advices, repeating some things which he had mentioned before, on which he may therefore be supposed to have laid particular stress.

1. i. e. That such slaves as have not obtained their liberty, pay due obedience to their masters, whose property they are.

As the Jews were great boasters of their liberty, and held it to be even unlawful to be subject to any other nation, and as the Gnostic teachers at Ephesus, as well as at Corinth, appear to have been Jews, it is probable that they extended the same imaginary privileges to the converts to christianity from the Gentiles, and they taught them, that being now of so much more consequence than they had been before, they were in the eye of God fully intitled to their civil liberty. That such a doctrine as this was maintained by some teachers of christianity, may be clearly inferred from this and other passages in the apostolical epistles. Now, had this been generally understood to be the genuine doctrine of christianity, it is easy to perceive what an obstacle

it

it must have proved to the reception of it, as it would have armed all free men against it. The apostle therefore informs Timothy, and the christian church at Ephesus through him, that christianity makes no change whatever in the civil condition of men, magistrates, or subjects, free men or slaves. He clearly gives them to understand that all moral obligations, arising from the outward conditions of men, continue the same as before; nay, that the peculiar duties of slaves, as well as those that were incumbent on other classes of men, were enforced by additional considerations every man acting as in the sight of God, and discharging his duty so as to be approved by that great being, who has thought proper for wise reasons to place him in the station he occupies, whatever it be.

2. There is ambiguity in the phrase *partaking of the benefit*, since some may understand it of the benefit or blessings of the gospel, but it is more probable that it refers to the benefit of their service; and therefore, the sense will be, that christian slaves should be more careful to discharge their duty to those masters who are christians. They should particularly respect them on that account, and serve them with greater cheerfulness.

3. From the apostle's passing immediately from his direction concerning slaves, to his admonitions concerning the Gnostic teachers, against whom he had warned Timothy before, it is very probable, that this doctrine of the exemption of christian slaves from servitude had been held by them.

4. Pride and conceit were among the chief characteristics of the Gnostics in all ages. They were in fact philosophical

philosophical persons who despised the vulgar ; but their's being a false philosophy, when it became incorporated with christianity, it was a source of much corruption of the genuine principles of true religion, from which the latter is not even now thoroughly freed.

5. We cannot suppose that any persons ever seriously maintained that the acquisition of wealth was godliness or virtue ; but they might be as attentive to it as if they had thought it to be as valuable as godliness ; or they might make a gain of godliness, making their harangues or set speeches in favour of it for hire, which appears to have been the case with the Gnostic teachers at Corinth ; for they cultivated eloquence as well as science. From this circumstance of the attention that these Gnostic teachers gave to gain, the apostle takes occasion to make some excellent observations on the subject, and to urge the duty and the wisdom of moderation in the pursuit of wealth.

10. Here again we see an avaricious temper joined with false principles of christianity.

13. i. e. Who will raise the dead and judge the world.

That is, notwithstanding his cruel persecution and sufferings ; which were as great as any that his followers can be called to endure.

16. There is a disorder in the construction of this sentence, contained in these two verses, which may occasion the misunderstanding of them. The true meaning I apprehend to be as follows. Having mentioned the appearance of Jesus Christ, or his second coming to raise the dead and judge the world, the apostle says

says, which appearing, he, viz. almighty God, who is *the only potentate, the king of kings, and lord of lords*, &c. shall shew or manifest, that is, this great event which is yet future will become present, being brought forward in its due time by that great being who has promised it, and who has power to fulfil all his promises.

20. Here again the apostle alludes to the false and specious philosophy of the Gnostic teachers, which he had mentioned so often before.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO

T I T U S.

TITUS, to whom this epistle was addressed, was a Gentile converted by Paul, probably at Antioch, and one who accompanied him from that place to Jerusalem, whither he was sent together with Barnabas, to carry a charitable contribution to the poor of that place. This was A. D. 43, about three years after the gospel had been preached to the Gentiles, and yet, as Paul observes, he would not suffer Titus to be circumcised, notwithstanding the very strong prejudices of the Jewish christian; at that time in favour of their ceremonies,

monies, and tho' he had ordered Timothy to be circumcised on account of his mother being a Jewess. After this we find Titus occasionally in the company of Paul, in the same capacity as Silas, Timothy, and some others, viz. to assist him in preaching the gospel, to be sent to particular places for that purpose, or to be fixed for some time where it was judged that they might be employed to advantage. The station of Titus was in the island of Crete, as that of Timothy, when Paul wrote to him, was at Ephesus.

These two epistles to Timothy and Titus resemble one another in many particulars, so that they seem to have been written in similar situations of things; Timothy having been appointed to regulate the church at Ephesus, and to ordain proper officers there, and Titus to do the same in Crete. They had likewise both of them the same difficulties to struggle with, from the false teachers of those times, who appear to have been Jewish Gnostics; being at the same time zealous for the law of Moses, and yet tinctured with the principles of that specious philosophy, which made matter to be the source of all evil, and led them to disbelieve the doctrine of a resurrection. Teachers of this class, who appear to have read lectures for hire, and to have undervalued the apostle Paul, we have found at Corinth and at Ephesus, and they were likewise, as we shall see in Crete.

It is not easy to fix the time when this epistle was written, on account of the great difficulty of determining when Paul was at Crete. He evidently had been there in company with Titus sometime before the writing

ting of this epistle ; and yet Luke makes no mention of his ever having been there in the account of his travels. Some therefore are of opinion that both the visit to Crete, and the writing of this epistle were subsequent to all that Luke has recorded concerning Paul, and that it was one of the last epistles that he wrote. But upon the whole it appears to me more probable, that he wrote it from Macedonia, presently after he had written the preceding epistle to Timothy, not long after his leaving Ephesus, A. D. 56.

Some think it possible that Paul might go to Crete immediately after leaving Ephesus at this time, tho' Luke says that he departed thence to go to Macedonia, and mention is made 2 Cor. ii. 13, of his being at Troas before he came to Macedonia, and his being surprized not to find Titus there. But on the whole I think it more probable, that Paul might have gone to Crete from Corinth during the two years which Luke says he spent there, that being his principal residence about three years before this time, and Titus going thither for reasons unknown to Paul, might be the cause of his not meeting with him at Troas.

3. I shall paraphrase these three verses as follows.

I Paul who addresse this epistle to thee Titus, do it as the servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, preaching that gospel which is held by all his true church and people ; the object of which is to promote the practice of virtue, in hope of obtaining that eternal life and happiness, which God who is faithful to all his promises, has designed for all who are duly qualified for it from the beginning of the world ; but who did not ful-

ly reveal this promise to mankind before the present preaching of the gospel, the dispensation of which is in part committed to me by the express appointment of God our Saviour.

4. Titus was Paul's own convert, and is therefore here called his son.

You see that the term Saviour is equally applied to God and to Christ. It signifies nothing more than deliverer, and therefore, may with equal propriety be applied to God in the first instance, and to any instrument that he may employ. Thus Moses is frequently called a saviour, or deliverer.

7. It is evident that elders and bishops were the same persons, for in one verse they are called elders, and in the next verse bishops; and as every city or town, for there were no great cities in the island, had bishops, it is evident, that they could not have been such as are now called diocesan bishops, having ministers of other churches subordinate to them.

We see by the qualifications here mentioned, and the similar ones in the epistle to Timothy, that these officers were only to be persons of more respectable characters, and free from such faults as would bring reproach upon the church. The reason why, as we may infer from these directions, there were many persons in the christian church at that time whose moral characters were very imperfect, was, no doubt, their late conversion from the very disorderly life that was led by the Gentiles in general; and christianity did not act as a charm, or suddenly, but gradually; there being in the
first

first place a change of belief,² or speculative principles only, and these producing in time a change of temporal conduct.

10. From this and other passages it is evident that the opposers of Paul were Jews zealous for the law; and as he does not appear to have had more than one sect or kind of opposers, and as in other places they are said to be great pretenders to knowledge, and to disbelieve the resurrection, it is evident they were exactly such persons as the new teachers at Corinth, or Jewish Gnostics.

12. It appears to have been a proverb among the ancients that the Cretans were liars. But they seem to have got this character originally, from their saying what was true, viz. that Jupiter who was worshipped in Greece was born and died among them, and from their shewing his sepulchre. For the rest of the Greeks, with a view to inculcate a higher opinion of their principal god, wished to decry that Cretan tradition, and said that the Cretans were liars for asserting it. They might, however, be addicted to lying as well as other vices, and having got this character, on whatever account, the apostle might quote the common proverb that was founded upon it against them.

One can hardly help concluding from this circumstance, that this letter was intended to be a private one, and not to be communicated to the persons whose characters are thus described, and consequently that it was not designed for the use of posterity, tho' in the course of divine providence it has been happily preserved to us.

The term *slow bellies* is a very awkward and improper rendering; it should rather have been *great gluttons*.

14. The *Jewish fables* here mentioned, were probably the same things that are elsewhere called endless genealogies, which I have shewn could not be any thing else than the idle notions of the Gnostics, of the generations or genealogies of their *Æons*, or superangelic spirits, and their derivation from the Supreme Being, and from each other, than which nothing could be more foolish or ridiculous.

15. In this it is probable, that the apostle alludes to some arbitrary prohibitions concerning meats and drinks by these superstitious Jewish teachers. As Paul himself was a Jew, and it is expressly said of him, that he walked orderly, and kept the law, the phrase *all things* here used must be restricted in its meaning by the nature of the case, and the sense will then be, that they who are pure in heart, may very safely eat what your teachers call impure; whereas to themselves whose hearts are unclean, every thing they do is impure; and no rules of diet that they can prescribe to themselves, will at all avail them in the sight of God. To the same purpose our Saviour said, that nothing that goeth into a man can defile him, when it is evident that he could not, at that time at least, mean to declare, or even to hint at the abolition of the law of Moses, with respect to clean and unclean meats.

16. It appears from ecclesiastical history, that some of the Gnostics were dissolute in their morals, as were the corrupters of christianity mentioned by Paul, Peter, Jude

Jude and John; tho' others of them affected the extreme of rigour. For their leading principle, of matter, or the body, being the source of all evil and independent of the mind was capable, as I have observed, of two quite opposite applications.

Ch. II. In this part of the epistle, Titus is directed what exhortations to give to persons and characters. They are very similar to those which were given to Timothy, and therefore, require very little explanation.

1. By *sound doctrine* the apostle probably meant that doctrine which has a good effect on the moral conduct of men; because advices relating to moral conduct immediately follow.

2. *Sober*, means vigilant, attentive to their duty.

3. *Good*, means of a benevolent gentle disposition.

6. i. e. Prudent and discreet, avoiding the rashness and violence to which youth is peculiarly prone.

7. *Sincerity* means purity.

9. I observed before that the Jewish Gnostics seem to have taught that slavery was unlawful to a Jew, or a christian, whereas the apostle informs them that christianity made no change whatever in the civil condition, or civil duties of men.

10. *Purloining* means privately embezzling.

14. In these words the great scope and end of the gospel is expressed, with peculiar clearness and energy. It is a system of religion, the great end of which is to make men virtuous here, and happy hereafter. Observe, however, that this hereafter is at the appearing, or second-coming of Jesus Christ, and not before.

This *appearing* is here called *the appearing of the great God*, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, from which some have hastily inferred that Jesus Christ and the great God were the same person. But a saying of our Saviour himself will clearly explain this. He says that he *shall return in his own glory, and in the glory of his father, and of the holy angels*. The *appearing of the great God*, therefore, signifies nothing more than that glorious presence of God which will accompany Jesus Christ, when he shall return to raise the dead and judge the world.

Here also we see the true meaning of the christian redemption: It is a deliverance from iniquity, and all the effects of it, by making us virtuous and good, and by no means a deliverance from the wrath of God by the death of Christ. How clearly is this expressed when the apostle says *that he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. The phrase *peculiar people* is borrowed from the Old Testament, where the Jewish nation is said to be a *peculiar people*, that is, distinguished from all other nations for great and valuable purposes. In like manner in the christian dispensation, all good men may be considered as the *peculiar people of Christ*, without any distinction of nations.

15. It is probable that Titus was not so young a man as Timothy. For in the exhortation respecting old men he is not directed to consider them as his fathers, and here he does not say as he did to Timothy, *let no man*

man despise thy youth, but simply, let no man despise thee.

Ch. III. The apostle concludes this epistle with some excellent admonitions, shewing the use of the gospel in mending the hearts and lives of men ; and likewise cautioning Titus against those dangerous principles which were at that time introduced into the church ; requiring him by all means to purge the church of them.

1. The proud and unsubmissive spirit of the Jews in general, and of these false teachers who were Jews in particular, I have frequently mentioned. To oppose this turbulent spirit the apostle gives these directions about submission to magistrates, christianity having nothing to do with the civil rights of men, since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. At the same time I would observe that christianity is far from being an enemy to civil liberty or temporal happiness. With respect to these things we are to act as our best judgment as men shall lead us ; and in every truly good cause, the principles of christianity will give a man both intrepidity in action, and resignation in miscarriage.

3. As a reason for behaving with meekness and forbearance towards all men, even the most refractory, the apostle reminds the christians what they themselves were before they received the gospel ; and it is very possible that in this he had a particular view to his own case and history, which he had before described in nearly the same terms. The description itself may agree well enough with Paul's former life, and especially with the idea that he now had of it, except that as he said,
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NOTES ON

that he had lived in all good conscience before God, it may be thought he could not here say, that he had ever served divers lusts and pleasures. But the word in the original does not imply sensual pleasure, but violent desires and gratifications of any kind, and that his character and conduct were violent, his history shews. There is, moreover, one ancient manuscript, which instead of *bating one another* has, *hating the brethren*, i. e. christians; which will exactly suit the case of Paul.

5. The *washing of regeneration* probably refers to the rite of baptism, by which was signified, as Peter says, *the putting away of the sins of the flesh*. The change was so great as to be styled by the term a new birth and a new life. After a natural birth, much attention was given to the washing of the new born child.

This gospel salvation is said not to have been given us for any works of righteousness that we have done, and certainly the gospel was the free gift of God to man. Paul in particular, and it is probable that he had a view to his own case, had done nothing to deserve to be called to it in the extraordinary manner that he was. Every means of improvement and happiness is the free gift of God, but then the improvement of it depends upon ourselves. Knowledge of any kind, and that of the gospel itself, is to be considered as a talent given us to improve, and if we ever arrive at the final gospel salvation, or the happiness of another life, it must be in consequence of the improvement of our talents, and

and of acting our parts well while here below. We shall then be rewarded according to our works, the works of righteousness that we perform here.

6. Paul in speaking of the abundant effusion of the spirit, seems pretty clearly to point to his own case ; as he was an apostle, and had therefore the power of imparting the gift of the spirit to others. This renewing power is ascribed both to baptism and the effusion of the spirit. But all that we are authorized to conclude from the passage is, that the principles of christianity, the profession of which was in those early times accompanied both by baptism and the gifts of the spirit, produced this change in the tempers and lives of men which the apostle here describes.

7. Notwithstanding every man will be rewarded according to his works, yet, as the whole dispensation of the gospel, by which we are put in the way of our duty and future happiness, is the free gift of God, and as no man can pretend to be justified on account of his innocence, but only by the mercy of God to the penitent, justification may still, with the greatest propriety, be said to be of grace. Our acquittal from condemnation is what God graciously grants to the penitent and sincere, but to no others.

8. The apostle having seen the great importance of good works, as necessary to be urged on all christians, and then passing immediately to the censure of the false doctrines, that were then introduced into the church, we cannot help concluding, that some of the maxims of these teachers were of a licentious kind ; and that they

they were so is farther evident from the epistles of Peter, Jude and John, and also from the book of Revelation.

The things here referred to under the name of *gemonologies*, I have observed before, were the Gnostic doctrines of the derivation of celestial beings from the supreme mind, than which nothing could be more absurd or various. These teachers being also Jews, laid great stress upon the law of Moses.

11. That the manners of these heretics or Gnostics, for it is evident from all antiquity that no other class of men was considered as heretics in the primitive times, were licentious, seems farther evident from the apostle here saying that they were *selfcondemned*. By this, however, he could only mean that their vices were so flagrant, that it was hardly possible to suppose but that they must blame themselves for them. There are perhaps no speculative principles from which a man will, at all times, and especially in his cooler moments, exculpate himself in cases, in which all the rest of mankind think him to be criminal, tho' in argument he might maintain the lawfulness of his conduct and pretend to justify it.

Heretics were those who had actually left the Catholic church, and having separated themselves from it, they must have known that they did not belong to it, and therefore in this sense, they might be said to be *self condemned*.

The apostle now concludes the epistle with giving directions about particular things. These little circumstances, tho' of no use to us in any other view, are of the

the greatest use in proving the genuineness of the epistles. They are so written as that no man can seriously believe them to be forgeries. Accordingly, it never was doubted either that they were Paul's, or that they were written in the circumstances to which he alludes. The proof of the truth of the gospel history from this one circumstance, is of a peculiarly clear and satisfactory kind to those who properly attend to it ; but few appear to me to have done this. It would be quite as easy, as I have observed, to account for the writing of the epistles of Cicero, upon the supposition of there being no truth in the Roman history, as to account for the writing of these of Paul, on the idea of there being no truth in the christian history ; so exactly do they correspond to one another.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

IT appeared from the tenor of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, that many abuses had crept into the christian church in that place, occasioned chiefly by some new teachers pretending to great knowledge, who wished to undermine the authority of Paul

Paul, and who discarded some of the most important doctrines of christianity, and especially that of the resurrection. The apostle had written to them from Ephesus with great earnestness on the subject, and had long been anxious to know what reception his epistle had met with. Titus, who had been sent with it, was to have met him at Troas, on his way to the western continent, but not meeting with him there, he proceeded to Macedonia, where Titus joined him, and gave him such an account of the state of the church at Corinth, and the reception that his epistle had met with, as gave him great encouragement; tho' he saw occasion to write to them a second time before he chose to visit them himself, which he did in the year following, viz. A. D. 58.

This second epistle is supposed to have been written from Macedonia or Illyricum, towards the end of the year 57, and like the former, it was also sent by Titus, who was returning to Corinth, in order to promote a collection for the poor christians at Jerusalem.

In this second epistle the apostle explains himself farther in some things which he had urged in the former, and he repeats his admonitions, tho' not always in the same direct manner, against the false teachers with whom they had been troubled. In this first chapter he gives the Corinthians an account of his own situation, and of his feelings with respect to them, by which they could not but perceive how much he had their interest at heart, and that he had no higher wish than their improvement in the knowledge of the gospel, and their happiness here and hereafter in consequence of it.

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4. Here the apostle probably alludes to the great satisfaction which he had received from the account that Titus had given of their affairs, and the effect of his former epistle; as well as his happy deliverance from the troubles at Ephesus.

5. As we resemble Christ in our sufferings, so we partake with him likewise in our consolations. We see here that the sufferings of Christ are placed in the very same light with those of other good men his followers. As he laid down his life for the brethren, we also are exhorted to do the same if we are called to it; which shews that there was nothing peculiar in the sufferings of Christ, as making atonement for the sins of men. He suffered in the cause of truth and virtue, and his example should encourage us to do the same.

6. i. e. The troubles which I undergo are of use to encourage you to act with the same fortitude, in suffering for the sake of the gospel, which will issue in your salvation and future glory. My consolation also contributes to yours.

10. We have but a very short account of the sufferings of Paul at Ephesus. He did not make his appearance in the great tumult, which was occasioned by his preaching there. At least Luke does not mention this. But his life was probably in danger, as he seems to have left the place immediately after it. In the former epistle he had mentioned his fighting with beasts at Ephesus, which must at least have been a figurative allusion to some great and imminent danger, whether it was during that tumult or not.

11. The *gift bestowed* was probably his deliverance, which he thought to be miraculous, and obtained by the prayers of his christian friends.

12. Here the apostle expresses the just cause of confidence in all troubles, especially those which are endured for righteousness sake.

By the phrase, *not with fleshy wisdom*, but by the *grace of God*, the apostle means his not governing himself by the maxims of worldly prudence and a regard to self interest, but by the maxims of the gospel, that is, by a regard to God and the duties that we owe to him. Or, perhaps, the grace of God may refer to those miraculous gifts of the spirit, by which he was distinguished, and especially at Corinth, where they had by his means been imparted to the christians there. These gifts were a token of the divine presence and favour, and therefore, a great encouragement to him to persist in the course in which he then was.

13. The apostle having given a general account of his conduct with respect to the Corinthians in the former part of this chapter, here calls them and God to witness for the truth of it, and as it is probable that he had been accused of changing his design of paying them a visit, from some improper motive or mere fickleness, he assures them that this was by no means the case, but that his conduct had been uniformly directed to their good, agreeably to the principles of christianity, which are always the same.

14. i. e. Part of the church of Corinth which had always thought well of him, and had not been disposed to cavil at him.

16. In

16 In the former epistle written from Ephesus, Paul had mentioned his design of visiting Corinth after he had passed through Macedonia, which is the very thing that he was now doing ; but he might have changed his purpose afterwards, and have informed the Corinthians of it, and now he reverted to his original design.

17. *According to the flesh*, i. e. were my views carnal and unworthy of the profession of the gospel ? Yea, yea and nay, nay, is a Jewish phrase, to express unsteadiness and uncertainty, by means of which a person was not to be depended upon.

19. Jesus Christ is here put for the gospel of Christ, the maxims of which are always the same ; as Paul's conduct in preaching had always been directed to the same end, varying only according to a change of circumstances.

22. The gifts of the spirit might be considered as a token of God's special favour, by which he assured the persons to whom they were imparted of their being his, and thus as it were set his seal upon them. Anointing was an ancient mode of appointing to an office of trust and favour, and therefore the gift of the spirit answering this purpose, is compared to that oil by which persons were consecrated for some great purpose.

23. Had I visited you before, I should have found you in such a disorderly state, that I must have been obliged to exercise my apostolical authority in such a manner as would have been disagreeable to me ; whereas, I wish to do it so as to express my complacence in you, on account of your steadiness in the faith of Christ, which you now begin to manifest.

THE PARAPHRASE.

What I have said concerning the maxims of my conduct and the foundation of my joy, is nothing but what I am confident you are fully persuaded of, and will continue to be so. At least I have this firm persuasion concerning some of you, that you consider me as the cause of your greatest happiness, as I consider you to be the cause of mine, and I hope it will appear to be so at the great day of the Lord. Having this persuasion concerning your affection for me, I purpose to visit you once more, in order to give you the same encouragement and consolation that I did on a former occasion.

My intention then was to have called upon you in my way to Macedonia, where I now am, and to have visited you again on my return from this country, that I might be conducted by you on my way to Judea. Having had this design, did I change it through mere fickleness as my adversaries may possibly represent, or am I governed by any worldly uncertain motives, which should make me act so unsteadily? On the contrary, I can take God to witness, that my conduct towards you hath been constantly uniform and steady, because I have been governed by the maxims of the gospel, which was preached by me and my companions, and which always leads to the same uniform end. For the promises of God to which christianity has respect, are all certain, and the object of the whole is the glory of the unchangeable God. It is this God who hath confirmed our common faith in the gospel, and at the same time

time sealed us as it were for himself, by the communication of the gifts of the spirit, so that we may consider ourselves as his.

It was in fact with a view to spare you, and that I might not find you in a situation to exercise my apostolical authority with rigour, that I declined visiting you at that time. Not that the object of those powers, or the pleasure I receive from them, is to exercise a mere authority over you, but my wish is thereby to give you some testimony of my approbation, and to promote your joy on account of the steadiness with which you have persevered in the profession of the gospel.

Ch. II. 1. In this chapter the apostle gives a farther reason why he had deferred his visit to the Corinthians, and this was lest he should give them pain by his severity. He therefore, waited till their conduct should enable him to see them to their mutual satisfaction. The affection which the apostle here discovers for his disciples at Corinth is very striking and edifying. His great object we see was to promote the success of the gospel, and this from his earnest desire to serve mankind in their best interests.

2. i. e. If I give you pain by my reproaches it is no less painful to myself, and I have no consolation but from the good effect of those censures.

3. I wish to have satisfaction in my visit not for my own sake only, but because I know that you will partake in that satisfaction.

5. Here the apostle probably refers to the incestuous person whom he had ordered them to expel from the church; which they appear to have done, and with the

best effect, as he repented of his offence, and was earnestly desirous of being readmitted into the church. The apostle here says of him that the scandal he had given had not affected himself, the apostle, only, but the whole church, that he was persuaded of the sympathy of the generality of them with him, and therefore he was far from meaning to reflect upon the church in general.

6. This implies that the excommunication of this incontinent person had been public and solemn, by the voice of the whole church, as the apostle had directed.

8. We have here one instance of the good effect of the strict discipline of the primitive church, and ecclesiastical history informs us of many others.

9. One object of his writing with severity before, was to oppose his authority to that of their false teachers, who were endeavouring to undermine his credit at Corinth, and this end was answered.

10. The apostle, considering himself as the ambassador of Christ, thought himself authorized in the execution of his commission to speak in his name. He uses a language similar to this upon other occasions.

11. By *Satan* we are to understand any adversary, and christianity had many of them in that, and indeed in every age; and whatever man or thing has a tendency to obstruct a good design is called Satan, or something equivalent to it, in the scriptures. Thus our Lord called Peter, Satan, when he would have diverted him from his resolution to die at Jerusalem, saying to him, *get thee behind me, Satan*. We are not, therefore, to infer from such passages as those that there is in the universe
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a great evil spirit, the rival of the supreme being, and continually thwarting him in his designs, more especially prompting men to all vice and wickedness here, in order to be the instrument of their punishment hereafter. The vices of mankind are not to be excused in this manner, as if they were drawn into sin by some invisible agent, to whose powers their own were by no means equal. Men's own depraved appetites are sufficient to account for all the wickedness there is in the world. Then, says James, is a man tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed.

13. At Troas Paul had expected to meet with Titus, by whom he had sent his former epistle from Ephesus, and from whom he had expected to receive an account of their situation; but not finding him there, he proceeded to Macedonia, where he did meet him, and received such an account of the state of things at Corinth as gave him much satisfaction.

14. *Who leadeth us in triumph. Brekeil.*

16. If we be faithful we are equally approved by Christ, under whose commission we act, whatever be the success of our preaching; whether it be properly received or not; whether men secure their future happiness by their obedience, or aggravate their condemnation by their disobedience.

17. Notwithstanding the importance of the commission with which the apostle was honoured, and for which he humbly thought himself insufficient, yet he comforted himself with the consciousness of his sincerity, that his endeavour had been to preach the gospel of Christ in its purity, and not to corrupt it as some teachers at

Corinth did. The allusion in this place is to those who retail wines and other liquors, and who often adulterate them for the sake of greater gain.

Ch. III. The apostle after speaking of the objection that might have been made to what he had said in the last part of the former chapter, as if he was going to speak in his own praise, and observing that he needed no recommendation to them, or from them to others, for that they themselves were his *epistle written in the heart*, and not as the law was upon *tables of stone*, he was led by this thought to make a comparison between the law, to which the new teachers at Corinth were much attached, and the gospel, as a dispensation much superior to it.

1. It is possible that these new teachers at Corinth had brought letters of recommendation from some of the church at Jerusalem, and had likewise got letters of recommendation from Corinth to other churches.

2. The Ethiopic version has *written to your hearts*, which makes a better sense. W.

6. *Γραμμα* signifies the letter of the law, and *Πνευμα* the spiritual sense of it, supposed to have been in the mind of the law-giver.

The apostle seems here to allude to the law as contained in the written books of Moses, of which the Jewish teachers made so great a boast : the gospel at that time was not committed to writing, but it was confirmed by the gift of the spirit, and to this difference the apostle seems to allude.

As the Judaizers made so great a boast of the law, without attending to the preceding dispensations of God

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to the patriarchs, Paul confines himself to the law of Moses, and shews that in itself considered, exclusive of those promises of favour to the penitents, which belonged to the religion of the patriarchs, it contained nothing but rigorous penakies against the disobedient. We are not, therefore, to consider Paul's censure of the law as extending to the whole system of religion of which the Jews had the benefit, but only the law of Moses strictly so called, as it was that of which these teachers made so great a boast. On any other supposition it is impossible to justify the apostles censure of the law in this and other passages of his writings.

7. We are not here to understand the apostle too literally, as if in his idea the obligation to keep the law ceased with respect to the Jews when they became christians. Had this been the case, it cannot be supposed that all the apostles, Paul himself included, would by their own observance of the law have given so much countenance to the great body of the Jewish christians, who considered their obligations to keep it as absolute and perpetual. All that is said in the advice of the apostles to the Gentile churches is, that they were not bound by it; and we do not know of any revelation being made to any of the apostles on this subject afterwards. By abolishing, therefore, and such phrases as these of the apostle Paul, we can only understand eclipsed by a dispensation more glorious; a dispensation which did not annul the law, but superadded to it something better, so that tho' Jews were converted to christianity, they still continued under the law, and

bound by its observances, being at the same time Jews and christians.

It was probably such language as the apostle used here, which according to its literal interpretation intimated that the law was to be abolished, that rendered him and his writings so obnoxious to the Jewish christians. But the respect that he had for those christians, and his strict attention to all the punctilios of the law in the last visit that he made to Jerusalem, after the offence had been given, probably by these writings, furnishes the best interpretation of them. It is as if he had said, I did not mean what you lay to my charge, or I expressed myself incautiously.

14. Paul having mentioned the veil that Moses put upon his face, represents it, by way of figure, as that which prevented the Jews from seeing him distinctly, or understanding the true meaning of his writings.

17. Christ is considered as the proper end or object of the law; and according to this apostle, christians are not considered as *slaves*, but as *free-men*, obeying not from fear, but from love.

18. Tho' the Jews could not see the splendour of Moses's countenance on account of the veil that was upon it, we christians see the unveiled glory of the gospel as if we saw it in a bright mirror, which reflects that glory upon ourselves, and this glory we partake of, in the gifts of the spirit.

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THE PARAPHRASE.

Do not imagine that I am going to launch out into my own praises, as my enemies object to me with respect to my former epistle. I have no need of any such method of bespeaking your good opinion, nor do I want letters of recommendation from you to any others, such as my enemies have made use of. Neither do I, as they have done, desire you to recommend me to other churches. I consider you yourselves as my best recommendatory epistle, an epistle written upon the heart where the impression will always remain, since your conversion to christianity is so well known, and must always do me the greatest honour. It may be called the epistle of Christ himself in my favour, I being his amanuensis to write it; an epistle not written with ink, but with the spirit of God, or those miraculous gifts by which your faith in the gospel was confirmed; an epistle written not as the law of Moses was upon tables of stone, but as I have said upon the heart.

It is my successful preaching of the gospel of Christ that is the ground of my confidence towards God. Not that I claim any merit to myself. It is God who has honoured me as his instrument in preaching the gospel; a system of religion not committed to writing, and contained in books like the law of Moses, but confirmed by the spirit. The written laws of Moses of which you boast, only threaten condemnation to the disobedient, but the gospel, which I preach, gives us the hope of eternal life.

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To you now who make so great a boast of the law, consider how much superior to it the gospel must be on this very account. If that which may be called the ministration or cause of death, written on stone, was delivered with so much glory that the Israelites could not bear even to look on the face of Moses, on whom a portion of that glory rested, which glory was to be eclipsed by the gospel, how much more glorious is that dispensation, which is confirmed by such miraculous gifts of the spirit as you have been witnesses and partakers of. If that which condemns be glorious, how much more glorious must that be which acquits and gives life. I do not deny that the dispensation of Moses was glorious, but it may be said to have no glory in comparison of that which has now taken place, which is much more glorious. If that which may be said to be abolished on account of its being greatly eclipsed be glorious, how much more glorious must that be which remains uneclipsed, and which is to continue to the end of the world.

Having this persuasion concerning the superior excellence of the gospel, I explain its principles with the greatest clearness, and do not follow the example of Moses who covered his face with a veil; which veil may be said to hide from the Jews the real use and intent of their law, so that they could not discern that it was to be succeeded by a more glorious dispensation. Their minds were so blinded in this respect, that we may say this veil still remains on their hearts, and that nothing but the knowledge of the gospel, which discovers to us the true use and end of the law, can remove it.

ft. For tho' the books of Moses are continually read in the Jewish synagogues, yet that veil, which prevents their understanding the true sense of them, remains upon their hearts, and cannot be removed till their conversion to christianity.

As the law may be compared to the letter, so christianity may be called the spirit of the sacred writings; and as the law is a state of servitude, the gospel is a state of liberty. We christians have no veil to look through, but see the glory of the gospel as in a bright mirror, so that the glory is even strongly reflected upon ourselves; the glory which shone in Christ being diffused over us in the miraculous gifts of the spirit, in which we all partake.

Ch. IV. The apostle continues to speak of his own conduct in preaching the gospel, and of his being exposed to great hardships, but nevertheless bearing up under them, supported by a firm faith in the promises of the gospel, which assures us of the most glorious reward to our perseverance in well doing.

1. Some MSS. have *we continue not in wickedness.*
2. Here the apostle disclaims the artifice with which he was charged, and asserts his preaching the gospel without any of the false glosses which the Gnostic teachers had put upon it.
3. By *bidden*, the apostle means being under such a veil as he had represented the law of Moses to be under.
4. Christ you see is represented as nothing more than *the image of God*, or rather the mirror from which the glory of God is reflected upon us, by such an image
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of the sun as we have in a mirror. This is reflected upon us from Christ, but all the light comes originally from God, who is styled the father of light, and the fountain of all wisdom.

The god of this world, here means the vices of the world or worldly prejudices, by which the minds of men are darkened and misled.

10. You will observe that the apostle frequently represents his own sufferings in the same light with those of Christ, they were both undergone in obedience to God, and to promote the cause of truth. The efficacy which has been ascribed to the sufferings of Christ, as if they were intended to render God propitious to sinful men, and as if he could not have pardoned the sins of men without them, has no foundation in scripture or reason, but implies the greatest reflection upon the justice as well as the mercy of God.

12. The Corinthians had not endured any such persecution as the apostle had.

13. i. e. Having the same faith that operated on the saints of old. The quotation is from Psalm cxvi, 10, in which David speaks of his confidence in the promises of God, notwithstanding his afflictions.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Being through the favour of God, intrusted with the ministry of such a dispensation as that of the gospel so much superior to that of the law, I bear up under every difficulty without being discouraged; and disclaiming every kind of artifice and every proceeding of

of which I might be ashamed, such as my enemies reproach me with, and not corrupting the principles of the gospel as they do, I am confident that by a simple undisguised exhibition of the truth, I shall approve myself to the conscience of every upright man, as I do to God who sees my heart. If the gospel which I preach with so much sincerity and openness, be under any veil like that which covers the Jewish law, it is only to those who are so blinded by their own worldly prejudices, that even the glorious light of the gospel of Christ, who may be said to be the image of God himself, cannot shine into them. For I must repeat to you that my object is not to recommend myself but the gospel of Christ; being myself no other than your servant in the gospel. For God who first said *Yet there be light, and there was light*, has now illuminated our minds by means of that glorious knowledge of himself, which is reflected upon us from the unveiled face of Christ, so that it is from him that I receive all the light and knowledge that I communicate to you.

Our manifold weaknesses and infirmities afford a proof that every thing that we have to communicate is from God, and not from ourselves. But notwithstanding my weakness, and the distress to which I am sometimes reduced, it is not so great but that I am able to bear up under it. Tho' I am perplexed, and know not what to do, I never despair. Tho' I be pursued, like one of the combatants in the Roman games, I am not forsaken of God. Tho' I even be thrown down in the combat, I am not suffered to perish in it. If I endure the same fate with my Lord and master, so that I may

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be said to be dead with him, it is that I may resemble him also in his resurrection and life. For we apostles who yet survive the rage of our enemies, suffer almost every day a kind of martyrdom, that the power of the gospel may be manifest in our weakness. Hitherto you Corinthians have not been exposed to this tribulation, so that it may be said, that we have for our portion the death of Christ, and you his life.

Nevertheless, having the same faith which operated and produced such great effects in the saints of former times, one of whom represents himself Psalm cxvi, 10, as having from his firm faith in his providence spoken the praises of God in the midst of great difficulties, we, possessed of the same principle, persist in preaching the gospel, looking to the end of our faith, even the general resurrection, when he who raised Jesus from the dead, shall raise us up by him, and shall restore us to life along with you, whose salvation and future happiness is the great end of all our labour and sufferings in this life; that God may then be glorified and praised by the whole church; in what manner soever the different members of it may have been employed, and however they may have been disposed of in this life.

Ch. IV. In this part of the epistle, the apostle having just before mentioned the various trials of christians in this life, speaks of their reward in a future life, comparing it with the present state, and the difficulties attending it. And it is evident that in his view, the future state is not to be an unembodied one, but a state in which we shall have bodies, only not corruptible as those that we now have, and where we shall enjoy the presence

presence of our Saviour, which we cannot have till his second coming, when, as he himself said, he would take his faithful disciples to himself, that where he is, there they may be also.

16. The *outer man* here means the body, and the *inner man* the mind, the affections of which certainly differ from those which are termed bodily, tho' both the body and the mind go together, and are inseparable from each other.

18. Here we have a striking view of the great principle of the christian life, as directed by a regard to objects beyond the grave, and he only deserves to be called a christian, whose views are habitually of this kind, who sits loose to this world, and who frequently meditates upon and governs his life by a view to another; as becomes one who considers himself as a citizen of heaven, and only a stranger and pilgrim here below.

Ch. V. It is evident that the apostle here overlooks any intermediate state between this life and the general resurrection, considering every advantage that we shall enjoy after death, as reserved for that state in which we shall have what he calls, *a building of God, eternal in the heavens*, i. e. an incorruptible body instead of that which is corruptible.

2. His wish evidently was to be possessed of this incorruptible body, and nothing short of it.

3. By *naked*, he means not exposed to diseases and death as we now are, a state which may be called nakedness, compared with that in which we shall be secured from these evils hereafter.

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4. *Unloathed*, means a state of death which has nothing desirable in it. His meaning in this verse is to express a wish that the present life may give place to a better after the resurrection.

6. i. e. We cannot in this life enjoy the presence of our Saviour, which is reserved for us at his second coming.

8. i. e. To exchange this life, in which we cannot have the presence of Christ, for that future one in which we shall have it.

9. *Present*, means present with Christ in a future life, and *absent*, means absent from him in the present life.

10. This clearly shews that the views of the apostle were not directed to any thing short of the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment, and that he had no prospect of any reward before that time. This, therefore, is the key by which we must interpret all that precedes this verse.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Having these great prospects, we bear up with fortitude and cheerfulness, under all our present difficulties. For tho' the body suffers, the mind is strengthened by these exercises, since the afflictions of the present life, which being of short duration are of little consequence, are the means of securing to us a degree of glory exceeding all our expectations, and of endless duration, while they keep our attention steadily fixed not on things which are the objects our senses, and which are but temporary

porary, but on things which are the objects of faith, and are eternal. For we know that when these perishable bodies of our's are dissolved, God will give us others, not such as are now derived by natural generation from our parents, but what he himself has provided and fitted for eternal duration in a better world.

The great object of our earnest wishes at present is to attain to this future happy state, to be clothed with that immortality which we shall have at the resurrection; for then we shall be clothed effectually, and not exposed to the accidents to which we are now liable, as if we were absolutely naked. For at present we, as it were, groan on account of the burdens of this life, occasioned by our perishable bodies; not that we wish for a state of death and insensibility, but that we may obtain our new and immortal bodies, that so mortality may be succeeded by immortality.

It is God himself who has given us these great prospects, and who has given us the fullest assurance of them by the gift of the holy spirit. We have, therefore, the greatest confidence in our future expectations, and are ever looking towards them, knowing that while we are in this life burdened with these corruptible bodies, we cannot enjoy that presence of our Saviour, which is reserved for the state after the resurrection. For the objects of our pursuit are things discerned by faith, and not by present sight; and yet we have the greatest confidence in these expectations, and rather wish that this mortal life was closed, that we might be ready to enter upon a future state of blessedness in which

we shall enjoy the presence of our Saviour, who will come again and then take us to himself.

Having these views, it is our constant endeavour to approve ourselves to him both with respect to this life and a future one. For our future life will certainly depend upon our behaviour in this, since, when Christ comes again to take his faithful disciples to himself, he will judge the world in righteousness, and give to every man according to his works.

12. This refers to the Jewish teachers who boasted of external privileges, and made less account of solid virtue, which has its seat in the heart:

13. In these epistles to the Corinthians, there are many concealed allusions to the state of things at Corinth, and especially to the apostle's enemies there, and their objections to him, which make them exceedingly difficult to be understood at this distance of time. It is probable that among other things the apostle is charged with a wild enthusiasm, and affecting to be more disinterested than was necessary. This, he here seems to say, arose from his zeal for the honour of God, and that of this God was judge; but that in the rest of his conduct they themselves might perceive that he was in his sober senses, and that he had most earnestly devoted himself to their service.

14. That Christ died for all was a kind of maxim among christians, and from this the apostle here infers the need that all men had of christianity, Jews as well as Gentiles.

16. i. e. Tho' I and others consider Christ as standing in a peculiar relation to God, I do not consider him
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in that light in the present argument. Or, what the apostle here says, may refer to his being despised by some on account of his not having been the companion of Christ, like Peter and the other apostles; as if he had said, should I have had that advantage, it would have been of no consequence to me now.

17. Here seems to be an allusion to Isaiah lxx. 17. *Behold I create all things new*; referring to the times of the gospel, and the renovation of all things by Christ. It has been owing chiefly to persons not distinguishing this figure of speech, that they have ascribed the old, or the proper creation, to Christ, as well as the new. But if we peruse Moses's account of the creation, we shall be satisfied, that there was no agent employed in that work besides God himself. The Psalmist also speaking concerning God says, *he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast*. When this work was accomplished with so much ease, what occasion could there be for employing any subordinate agent?

19. It is to be observed that it is here said, *that God was reconciling the world to himself by Christ*. There was no occasion to reconcile God to the world. He was always disposed to be at peace with men, whenever they should repent and turn to him. All that was wanting, therefore, was to bring men to repentance and reformation by the preaching of the gospel, and then God would be reconciled to them of course.

21. i. e. He suffered him to die as a sinner, tho' he was innocent, that we from being sinners may become righteous; the great object of the gospel, which was

confirmed by the death and resurrection of Christ, being the reformation of the world.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Knowing, therefore, the future judgments of God, it is the object of my preaching to persuade men to live so as to escape them. What this is the object of my preaching, God is witness, and I trust my sincerity in this respect must be evident to yourselves. I say not this by way of boasting, but to enable you to vindicate me from the aspersions of those who make their boast of externals, and not in things that relate to the heart. If I sometimes appear to be beside myself, carried away as with a phrenzy with which my enemies reproach me, it is my zeal in the cause of God, that produces this effect, and if I proceed with firmness and steadiness as if in my right mind, which you must acknowledge I sometimes do, it is a regard to your good and edification that is my motive.

It is only zeal for the honour of God, and to promote the cause of christianity that actuates me, considering of how much importance christianity is to all men. For since Christ died for all, it is evident that all men stood in need of that religion which was confirmed by his death and resurrection. All men, therefore, may be considered as having been in a state of death, and Christ died that they might live, and not to themselves, in the gratification of their carnal desires, but to him who died for them, and rose again, obeying his holy precepts.

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Considering, therefore, that christianity equally respects all men, I make no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, as your teachers do; and tho' I, as well as others, at first considered Christ as the Messiah of the Jews only, and of their proselytes, I now no longer consider him in that partial light. All men, therefore, being equally considered as dead before they embrace the gospel, and alive afterwards, the proper proof of any person being a true christian, is his being a new man, evidenced by a change of his disposition and conduct. In christianity is verified the saying of the prophet, behold I make all things new, all old things are, as it were, passed away. And this new creation, as well as the old, is of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has appointed me his minister in reconciling others. For, by means of the gospel of Christ, God *is reconciling the world to himself*, not imputing to them those trespasses, which the gospel obliges them to renounce; and he has commissioned me to teach this doctrine of reconciliation.

I consider myself, therefore, as an ambassador from Christ; God himself may be said to entreat you by me, and I entreat you as in the place of Christ, persuading you to be reconciled to God, and to make him your friend by repentance and good works. For the reason why God treated Christ, who was an innocent person, as if he had been a sinner, suffering him to be put to an ignominious death, was, that we might by his gospel become righteous.

Ch. VI. The apostle continues to speak of himself as acting in the cause of God, and represents his painful

and disinterested services in promoting the gospel; indirectly reproving the Corinthians for their want of affection to him, who had shewn so great a zeal for their interest. He then proceeds to hint at the impropriety of near connections with unbelievers.

1. i. e. With God, whose ambassador he was.

2. This is a quotation from Isaiah XLIX, 8, in which God is speaking of the favour which he reserved for the Israelites in the latter days. This the apostle applies to the times of the gospel, when God was making the most gracious offers to mankind, which they ought joyfully to accept and improve.

4. Here the apostle speaks again of his own conduct, in the faithful and prudent discharge of his duty, notwithstanding he had not given entire satisfaction to all the disciples at Corinth.

6. By the *holy spirit*, means the miraculous gifts of the spirit, which Paul, as an apostle, had a power of conferring. This, if nothing else, ought to have satisfied his enemies at Corinth, that he was truly the apostle of Christ, and have saved him from their calumnies and ill offices.

10. By imparting to them the best gifts, is to be understood the knowledge of the gospel.

This was a noble appeal to the apostle's conduct, and especially his daily sufferings in the cause of truth, for his sincerity and disinterested zeal in the service of the gospel, and of his christian converts; and should serve to encourage others in all ages who suffer from calumny, while they are strenuously labouring to promote the cause of truth. If the zeal of this apostle, his unwearied

ed labours, his patient suffering and prudent conduct, could not save him from continual opposition, and even from those who professed the same gospel with himself, why should we wonder at the like happening at this day, when christians are much more divided among themselves, and when there are consequently many more occasions of offence. It ought to satisfy every man, as it did the apostle Paul, that he can acquit himself to his own conscience, and to God who knows the heart. Whatever we suffer from friends or enemies, while we act in this manner, we shall be abundantly recompensed at a future day.

11 Meaning, probably, that he then spake with great freedom to them, from the earnest affection he had for them, or, that he was glad of every opportunity of speaking in their praise.

12. i. e. You have much room in my heart and affections, but you do not make a proper return for it.

13. As a proper return for my affection, give me, as your father, the same room in your affections, that you, as my children, have in mine.

14. This was probably meant to shew the impropriety and danger of marrying unbelievers, whose worship was so different from theirs, and might be a snare to them.

16. This is a noble image, by which every christian is taught to consider himself as the temple of God, and should therefore keep himself holy and undefiled.

18. This does not appear to be found in so many words in any part of the Old Testament, from which the

apostle seems to quote it ; but it expresses the sense and general tenor of a great part of the ancient prophecies, in which God considers the Jews as his people and children, and promises them the affection and the blessings of an indulgent parent, if they behave as becomes their relation to him.

Ch. VII. 1. This verse should have been connected with the last of the preceding chapter. It expresses the great end and design of the gospel to reform the world, by improving the morals of men. If this end be not attained, the gospel and the preaching of it are both in vain. Nay, if our lives be not such as becomes the gospel, it had been infinitely better for us not to have been born, or to have lived heathen idolaters, as our ancestors were, as we should not then have incurred the aggravated guilt, of loving darkness rather than light; because our deeds were evil.

This part of the epistle relates wholly to the particular situation of things at Corinth, whither the apostle was then directing his journey, hoping for a favourable reception from the christians there, on account of his disinterested conduct towards them, notwithstanding the pain he had given them by his former epistle ; a pain however which had produced the happiest effects, his severe reproofs having reclaimed those on whom he had animadverted, especially the person who had married his father's wife.

2. In this commendation of himself, the apostle probably alludes to the conduct of the false teachers, by whom the affections of his converts had been drawn from himself. They had made a gain of them ; he had
not ;

not : and they had corrupted the principles of the christian religion, which he had been far from doing.

3. i. e. I do not say this to charge you with ingratitude towards me, for, upon the whole, I think so well of you, and of your affection for me, that I could wish to spend the remainder of my life among you.

4. The apostle's success in preaching the gospel at Corinth, after spending a considerable time to very little purpose at Athens, gave him great joy ; and it appears that next to Antioch and Ephesus, the christian church at Corinth was the largest of any out of Judea. The anxiety which the apostle had on his mind about the state of this church, we clearly see in every part of both of these epistles. They discover the most genuine strong feelings, such as no forger or inventor of letters could have assumed. Every paragraph speaks the genuineness of these epistles ; and the genuineness of them is one of the strongest internal marks of the truth of the christian religion. For, as I have often observed, if the principal facts of the gospel history were not true, the existence of these epistles, written as they are, cannot be accounted for.

6. His former epistle to the Corinthians had been carried by Titus, who also brought the apostle an account of the reception it had met with.

8. We see by this circumstance that the apostle wrote from the feelings of his own heart, and from no immediate inspiration of the spirit of God, which was indeed altogether unnecessary. For he could never have repented, or have been inclined to repent of what he had written by the suggestion of the holy spirit. But
it

it was quite natural for him to suspect, that writing from his own quick feelings, he might have expressed himself too strongly, so as to have done more harm than good by his writing.

10. i. e. Mere grief and distress of mind is a hurtful thing; preying upon the constitution, and at length bringing on the premature dissolution of it. We should, therefore, be careful to govern our passions, and never give way to grief, which has naturally so unfavourable an effect, but where there is great cause for it.

11. These are marks of repentance in different persons, according to their different situations and states of mind.

12. As particular mention is made of some person who had suffered wrong, it is not improbable but that the father of him who had married his step-mother was living, and had therefore great reason to complain of injury.

14. This circumstance is one of many that speak the natural feelings of the human heart. The apostle had boasted to Titus of the good state of the church at Corinth, and was, therefore, glad to find on his return that upon the whole he had not been disappointed by his own visit to them.

Ch. VIII. You will remember that the Jewish christians were, in general, persons in low circumstances, tho' there were among them some of rank and fortune. These had been very liberal in their contributions for the maintenance of their poorer brethren, but the multitude being great, and the country in general much distressed by famine and other causes, the assistance of
their

their Gentile brethren was much wanted, and this was cheerfully given.

This general poverty of the Jewish christians, from whom the gospel was propagated, is a circumstance highly favourable to christianity, as it clearly shews; that they with whom the gospel originated, had neither power nor wealth to procure it any credit, so that there was nothing but its own proper evidence in its favour; and this proved to be sufficient to insure its success. What could induce the learned and the wealthy in all the considerable cities of Greece to become christians, when the head of the religion was regarded as a crucified malefactor, and most of his followers in Judea were in poor and distressed circumstances? Had the first christians been the great and the wealthy of the country, what a handle would that have furnished the unbelievers of this age, for surmise and suspicion, even without any proper evidence of fraud, because the rich and the great are always known to have the means of imposing upon the vulgar; but the poor and ignorant vulgar have it not equally in their power to deceive the learned and the rich.

I would observe farther, that the relief afforded to the poor Jewish christians by the wealthy Greek converts, must have operated very favourably towards removing the prejudices which they generally entertained against the Gentile converts, who did not conform to the laws of Moses.

In this part of the epistle, the apostle, with great address, recommends to the Corinthians a collection which
he

he was making for the relief of the poor disciples at Jerusalem.

1. The word which is rendered grace, frequently signifies, a favour or benefaction; and the term God is frequently used to express magnitude. Thus mountains of God signifies large mountains, and a river of God a great river. So here probably, a benefaction of God, may mean a great and generous benefaction, which the christian churches in Macedonia, had made to their brethren in Judea. But as the apostle, and all pious writers of the scriptures, ascribe every thing that is good to God, who is the ultimate cause of all good, he might at the same time mean to say, that God had put it into the hearts of the christians in Macedonia, to act in this generous manner. For such is the usual language of the sacred writers, when they do not mean direct inspiration, but only to intimate good thoughts arising from good dispositions of mind.

2. It is conjectured that the genuine reading was, *the abundance of their wants*, and not of *their joy*. The alteration in the original is slight, and the sense much better. W.

The generosity of these Macedonian christians, was the more extraordinary, as their circumstances were distressing, on account of their situation with respect to their idolatrous neighbours, and the Jews who were the earliest, and, at that time, the most inveterate enemies of christianity. Yet, notwithstanding this distress, they rejoiced in the hope of the gospel, and tho' they were not very rich, that is, compared with the Corinthians, who

who were remarkable for their opulence, they made a very generous contribution.

5. i. e. Much beyond our expectation.

They considered themselves and all their property as God's, and requested that we should be the dispensers of what they considered themselves as holding in trust for the public use, which is the true light in which all superfluous wealth ought to be regarded. We are all stewards, and every man is accountable to that God, who gives power and opportunity to get wealth, who maketh rich, and who maketh poor, for the uses to which we apply all that we can properly spare.

6. The christians in Macedonia having contributed so liberally, I was the more desirous that Titus should promote a similar contribution among you.

7. We have seen that the Corinthians were not a little proud of the spiritual gifts with which they were distinguished. Their abounding in diligence, means their zeal in correcting the abuses that he had complained of among them.

8. The great address of the apostle, which we discover in the manner in which he recommends this charitable contribution, shews that he was far from being a mad enthusiast; and his conduct through life, that he was equally far from being an interested or ambitious man. No man of his age made a greater sacrifice with respect to preferment, and every emolument in this world, than this apostle had done. In this he went beyond any of the apostles. But they forsook their all, tho' their prospects were not so promising as those of Paul, to follow Christ.

9. The apostle recommends generosity to others by the example of Christ, whose grace or kindness he here speaks of. For tho' he may be said to have been rich, as he had the command of riches, and of all the powers of nature, which appeared in the miraculous draught of fishes, his multiplying provisions on two different occasions, and his paying the tribute with money found in the mouth of a fish, yet he chose a low and indigent station of life, and never availed himself of his miraculous power to supply his own wants, or to relieve himself in any difficulty whatever, but devoted himself and all his time to the good of others.

There is no ground to infer from this passage, that the apostle considered Christ having been rich any where but on earth. He says nothing like this, and therefore, to infer from this passage that Christ had any being before he was born, and that he left a glorious pre-existing state to come and serve mankind here, is destitute of all foundation.

10. He thought it became the Corinthians not to be behind other churches, especially those who were less opulent, and to whom this contribution had been proposed more lately. The Corinthians it seems had intended this a year before.

12. The real value of a benefaction with respect to the giver, is finely illustrated by our Saviour, who said that the poor widow in giving her mite had given more than those who had contributed large sums, because she had given her all. It is the intention and good disposition that God respects, but every man's disposition,
and

and good will in any cause, is shewn by the proportion their contributions bear to their circumstances.

14. There was not indeed any great prospect at that time, of the Jewish christians being able to supply the wants of the Gentile churches in a pecuniary way. But, in general, nothing is more uncertain than riches, and they who now abound should always consider that they may come to want, and should, therefore, act while they are rich, as they would wish to have done, and that others would do to them when they became poor.

15. This is an allusion to the gathering of manna in the wilderness, where we read, that tho' some gathered more, and others less, all shared alike. Exod. xvi, 18.

18. This person is by many thought to be Luke, the usual companion of Paul.

19. *This grace* means this charity or benefaction.

20 Paul to avoid all suspicion of embezzlement, did not chuse to take the charge of this benefaction himself, but had associates who joined him in the discharge of this trust.

23. Or rather *instead of Titus*, this other companion supplying his place. W.

This was probably Apollos, who appears to have been very popular at Corinth, and, therefore, the more fit to be sent on this business.

i. e. Has the glory or interest of Christ, and christianity at heart.

Ch. XI. In this part of the epistle, the apostle continues to recommend the charitable contribution which he was making for the relief of the poor christians in Judea, and he does it with wonderful address, but at the

the same time with the greatest propriety, for the occasion of this charity was very just and urgent, and, therefore, would justify this address with respect to those who were not so fully persuaded of this as he himself was. And I would again observe, that this refined address in the apostle, shews that he was a man in the full possession of all his faculties, and no mad or wild enthusiast; that he was, therefore, as good a judge of the evidence of christianity as any other man, and that he would no more have sacrificed his flattering prospects in life, than any other young Jew of distinction, and who had the same prospect of wealth and preferment in his country that he had, without sufficient reason.

1. By *saints* the apostle simply meant christians, and did not use the term in that peculiar sense which it has acquired since, in which there is much of superstition, on which account it were well if the word could be changed for some other, which might more clearly express the apostle's idea. He certainly considered all christians as men, who professed to devote themselves to God and his service, and this is the original meaning of the words *holy* and *sanctified*. Some persons, no doubt, did this more earnestly and effectually than others, but speaking of the whole body of people for whom this charitable contribution was intended, he could not consider them all as saints in the popish sense of the word, and least of all as men abstracted from the world, wholly devoted to contemplation and prayer, and living on the labour of others. There is no charity in giving to such persons. As this apostle himself somewhere else says, *he that will not work, neither let him*

him eat. The proper objects of charity are those who are willing to exert themselves, but labour under some impediment, as sickness &c; those who have laboured, but whose labour has not been sufficient to secure them a competence in their old age; but more especially still those young persons, whose parents are not able to introduce them into a life of labour and activity with proper advantage: those you assist, in order to qualify them to labour and to be useful in life, and not to be idle in it.

4. We see the apostle's refined address more particularly in these verses. He tells the Corinthians that they should exert themselves the more, because he had boasted to the Macedonians of what they would do, and, therefore, he would have them contribute generously, that he might not have occasion to be ashamed of his boasting; finely insinuating that the shame would likewise fall upon themselves, concerning whom he had made such boasts.

I would likewise observe from this passage, that the apostle certainly could not intend that the churches in Macedonia should know what he was now writing, for that would have defeated his fine address. We may conclude, therefore, that he wrote from his present feelings only, for the use of those particular churches to which his epistles are addressed, and for no other; without any thought that they would be preserved for the use of the whole christian world in future time. But it is happy for us, that the providence of God had farther views than Paul himself had. These epistles furnish the most decisive evidence of the truth of the

the gospel history, at the same time that they are of the most excellent use, in explaining and enforcing the doctrines of it. But all this will be much more sensibly felt, if we consider the apostle as writing from his own natural feelings only, and not from any particular inspiration, which was altogether unnecessary in the case.

5. i. e. Which had been spoken of before.

Not as of covetousness, i. e. not a thing wrung from you by importunity.

8. You that make a right use of the wealth with which God has blessed you, have the greatest reason to expect that he will add to it, so that it will always be in your power to make the like contributions.

12. There is a double use in charity. It both relieves want, and occasions great joy in good men in seeing the benevolence of others, leading them to praise God for it.

13. There is a peculiar intricacy in these last verses. I would paraphrase them in the following manner.

Besides relieving the distressed of your fellow christians who are in want, you give great joy to those who are not in want; who seeing your liberality, glorify God, that his gospel produces such valuable fruits. This makes them earnest in prayer to God for the future happiness of such worthy brethren, who have, on that account, so large a share in their affections, as being so fully entitled to it. Among others, I bless and praise God for his gospel, which answers such an excellent purpose, and which forms such characters.

Ch.

Ch. X In this part of the epistle the apostle checks the insolence of his enemies at Corinth, who despised him on account of his mean appearance, and boasted of themselves as superior to him, whereas, as he observes, they had only preached in those churches which had been planted by himself and others, and had planted none of their own.

1. It is said by some pretty ancient writers that Paul was of a low stature, crooked and bald. That he did not make so respectable an appearance as Barnabas, is pretty evident from the people of Lystra supposing Barnabas to be Jupiter, the king of the gods, and Paul to be only Mercury his messenger. These new teachers at Corinth, thought the stile of Paul's epistles too high for his personal appearance and manner.

2. As Paul had struck Elymas blind, for opposing the gospel, prompted, no doubt, at the instant by the spirit of God, he might think it probable that some such miracle would be wrought by him, in order to check the arrogance of these new teachers his enemies, and the enemies of the gospel at Corinth. Their accusing him as walking after the flesh, probably means their ascribing to him artifice and design, or some sinister view in his conduct. And I would observe upon this occasion, that no man's conduct was ever so truly irreproachable and disinterested, but bad and unworthy motives have been imputed to him. Our Saviour himself did not escape calumnies of this kind. Men of the world will judge of others by themselves, and cannot suppose that others will act a part of which they are incapable. We at this day, therefore, if we be conscious that truth and

the good of mankind, are our objects, ought not to be concerned or surprized at calumnies of a similar nature, as if some new or unheard of thing happened to us. We ought rather to rejoice, that we are counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach in a good cause. Many before us have been accounted deceivers, who nevertheless were true.

3. i. e. I ho' liable to the infirmities of human nature and living in the world by conduct not directed by worldly views. The christian life is frequently compared to a warfare. The phrase *according to the flesh* generally means, unworthy or base principles.

5. Notwithstanding the weakness for which the apostle was despised, his preaching had been able to produce the greatest effects ; demolishing the fortifications as it were of idolatry, and subduing the minds of men by the force of conviction, making them converts to the truth of the gospel.

6. Now that the church at Corinth was recovered to a sound state, it might be proper to punish those who had opposed the apostle, by some exemplary judgment. Had this been done before, too many persons might have taken offence at it, and, therefore, the good effect of this civility might have been prevented.

7. Mr. W. renders this, *Considering what is before you.* W.

8. He had before alluded to his authority as an apostle, and to that power with which, as such, he had been entrusted for the good of the church, and for punishment only when necessary ; yet he had fallen short of what he might have said on that subject.

10. i. e.

10. i. e. He assumed an authority when he wrote, but appeared timid when present. They could not say that his letters wanted eloquence, tho' he was an inelegant and embarrassed speaker. But with respect to composition, there is far from being any excellence in the apostle's writings. He writes, indeed, with energy, from the fullness of his heart; but there is a great want of perspicuity, the chief requisite of composition, in his epistles. However, prompted by his strong feelings, he often expresses himself so as to animate and affect his readers; and in some passages he seems to imitate the splendid and figurative style in which the Greeks prided themselves so much; as when he speaks of his persecutions, when he writes in praise of charity and faith, and on some other occasions.

12. Here the apostle seems to speak ironically, as if he did not presume to compare himself and his services to those of the eloquent teachers at Corinth; but he hints that they did not judge of themselves by a proper standard, comparing themselves with others who had done very little.

14. It is said that at the Isthmian games, which were in the neighbourhood of Corinth, each of the racers had a particular course marked out for him, to which he was to confine himself, that he might not interfere with any other.

Here the apostle seems to insinuate that all that had been done by these new teachers, allowing the merit of it, was in churches which he had planted, whereas he, as the apostle of the Gentiles, had employed himself in his own proper province only, and not that of another:

another ; and that he had regularly proceeded in his preaching of the gospel from Antioch to Corinth.

15. i. e. That you will acknowledge that I have faithfully discharged my duty, and kept within my proper province.

17. Let those who have done the most to promote the gospel remember, that in this they act as the servants of Christ ; or the meaning may be, let them consider that they only do what God has employed them in, and appointed them to do ; for the term Lord is used indifferently of God and of Christ.

Ch. XI. The object of the apostle in this part of the epistle is to humble the pride of the new teachers who opposed him at Corinth, by an exhibition of his own disinterestedness, unwearied labours, and patient sufferings, in the cause of christianity. We cannot wonder at the apostle's anxiety about supporting his character and reputation at Corinth, as it was not merely a personal concern, for which, however, every reasonable man will hold him justified ; but the credit of the gospel which he preached, especially as opposed to these new teachers, depended upon it.

We have here also the example of the apostle, to justify great zeal in defence of what we deem to be the pure fruit of the gospel, and in opposing what we deem to be corruptions of it. The zeal of the apostle in this cause, was hardly less than his ardour in preaching the gospel itself to the heathen world. Indeed, the new teachers denied, or explained away, the most fundamental article of christianity, viz. the doctrine of a resurrection. If any thing in christianity be of value, this
certainly

certainly is ; tho' it does not appear that they denied a future state of rewards and punishments. But the apostle having no knowledge of a future state independent of a resurrection, treated their doctrine as undermining all belief in a future state of retribution.

The great corruption of christianity in later ages, has been the abandoning the great doctrine of the divine unity, which was the primary object of all revelation, and setting up the worship first of Christ, then of the virgin Mary, and then of innumerable saints and angels, so as to make christianity, in form and in spirit too, resemble the worship of the heathens themselves. Certainly then, a considerable degree of zeal is becoming us, in order to restore this valuable religion to its primitive purity in this respect. Had the apostle Paul heard or suspected any such thing, he would, no doubt, have expressed himself with at least as much warmth, as he did against the false doctrines, that prevailed in his time.

1. In this the apostle alludes to the boasted wisdom of the Gnostic teachers ; and since they considered him as a simple and ignorant man, he would take the privilege of that foolish simplicity which they ascribed to him, by speaking in his own praise, as foolish people are apt to do.

2. In other places Christ is considered as the husband, and the church as the wife.

4. If these teachers preach another Jesus, and another gospel, as valuable as that which I have preached, particularly accompanied with gifts of the spirit, as distinguished as those which have been conferred upon

you by my preaching, the Corinthians would have something to say in excuse for listening to them.

5. i. e. As your teachers have no gospel to preach superior to mine, so neither can you say that in preaching the same gospel I am inferior to other apostles, tho' they insinuate as much.

6. The word here used signifies a private man, especially one unacquainted with literature; and Paul, though learned as a Jew, yet not being versed in Grecian learning, or perfect in the Greek language, might be despised on that account by the conceited teachers at Corinth.

7. It was deemed a meanness in a person, of so high a rank as an apostle, to work with his own hands, and maintain himself by labour.

12. There must have been some very particular reason why the apostle, who had no objection to receive money from the church of Philippi, should decline this at Corinth. It should seem that he was very soon apprized of the character and pretensions of these new teachers, and that he was determined to expose their avarice by his own disinterestedness, and, as he here perhaps intimates, make them ashamed of their conduct and conform to his. For this may be the meaning of his here saying, *that they may be found even as we.*

13. The severity with which the apostle inveighs against these new teachers is very great, but it was just, if, as we may infer from this epistle, they not only undervalued this apostle, making themselves superior to him, but taught what was in reality another gospel, in opposition to his.

14. It

14. It is not easy to say what it is which the apostle alludes to in this place, but I think it is most probable that he had an eye to the book of Job, in which it is said ch. i. 6, that there was a day when the sons of God (by whom were probably meant angels) came to present themselves before the Lord, and that Satan came also among them; appearing perhaps as one of them, tho' he was well known to God, who addressed him in his proper character. I need not observe that the whole of this representation is an allegory, founded on the idea of God keeping a court like that of an eastern prince, and holding on certain days what we now call a levee, when his chief ministers attend upon him, to shew their respect, and to receive his orders; so that we are by no means authorized to infer the real existence either of Satan, or of angels, from this figurative description.

17. i. e. I do not pretend upon this occasion to speak with the modesty and humility of Christ, or as would be requisite in a christian upon other occasions. The situation of the apostle was particular, and required him to speak of himself and his conduct in a manner that he would not always chuse to do.

18. i. e. In external advantages, especially as Jews, as were these teachers.

20. i. e. To the Jewish rites and ceremonies.

i. e. You shewed great rudeness and insolence.

21. He here means the reproach that was cast upon the Gentiles, as inferior to the Jews.

22. By *Hebrews*, the apostle may mean, are they acquainted with the Hebrew language, so as to be able to consult

consult the scriptures in the original? Perhaps these phrases may all mean the same thing, being an enumeration of such epithets as these teachers gave to themselves, and prided themselves in.

24. The Jews were restrained by the law of Moses from inflicting more than forty stripes, and, lest they should exceed that number, they always gave fewer. It is said by some that they made use of a whip with three thongs, and, therefore, could not strike more than thirteen times without exceeding forty stripes.

25. *Beating with rods*, means scourging after the Roman manner, which was with very great severity, as our Saviour was scourged before his crucifixion.

26. In the last circumstance he alludes to the trouble which the new teachers at Corinth gave him, intimating, as it were, that it affected him more than any of the rest.

29. By *offended*, the apostle probably meant ready to fall away from the profession of the gospel. By *burn*, he means that he was most anxiously concerned on that account.

33. This was probably after he had distinguished himself as a preacher, and after the three years in which he had been absent from Damascus, which immediately succeeded his conversion.

Ch. XII. As the apostle was much undervalued and despised by the new teachers at Corinth, he was led in the former chapter, to mention several things, which tended to make him appear to advantage, and he proceeds in this to mention others, especially some remarkable revelations which had been made to him, and towards

wards the close of the chapter, he mentions again his forbearing to take any thing of the Corinthians, either himself, or by any of his fellow labourers.

1. Tho' it is not in general convenient to boast, yet it was expedient for him on this occasion, and, therefore, he would proceed to mention his visions and revelations.

2. By this person there can be no doubt of Paul's meaning himself, and he intimates that tho' in himself he had nothing to boast of, yet considered as a person, distinguished as he had been by Christ, there was a just foundation for his boasting.

Paul did not know whether he was really carried up to the third heavens, or whether it was a vision. He did not know whether he was there in the body, or only in the mind; in reality, or in appearance; his mind being supernaturally impressed, in the same manner as if he had been there in person. That it was a vision is much the most probable, since a local heaven, which the reality of the representation would suppose, has no existence, God being alike every where present, tho' in the figurative language of scripture, he is represented as keeping a court somewhere above the clouds, attended by angels as his ministers. The third heaven means a region higher than the first, where the clouds are, or that which is immediately above them; it having been thought more consonant to the majesty of God, that he should reside at a great distance from the earth. But all these representations are adapted to our low and imperfect conceptions concerning God, and the manner of his existence, and there is no inconvenience attending them.

them. For still the providence of God is supposed to extend to all things, and he sees and takes cognizance of every thing. As the prophet describes him, he sitteth on the circle of the heavens, and from thence beholdeth all the sons of men.

4. This is another and distinct vision, and, therefore, it is prefaced in the same manner as the former, by the apostle saying that he did not know whether his body was removed or not, the vision being so distinct that he could not tell the difference. In the former vision he seemed to be in the third heaven, where God is supposed to reside with Christ at his right hand, but in this vision he was in paradise, which is the place of the virtuous dead. All the ancient interpreters of scripture, who lived nearest to the times of the apostles, and were best acquainted with their language, and the ideas of the times, supposed this place to be quite different from the third heavens mentioned before.

According to our version this paradise should be above the earth, for it is said, that he was carried up to it; but in the original it is, he was carried into it, which might be either upwards or downwards, or in any other direction. With respect to the third heavens it is said, that he was carried as far as if it was a place at a great distance from us, which is not intimated with respect to paradise. This latter place which was always supposed to be the receptacle of virtuous souls, was called by the Jews the garden of Eden, or paradise, which signifies a garden; and the customary prayer of the Jews for their departed friends shew, that they still retain the same ideas. The form of this prayer, is given by Lightfoot in

in his works, Vol I. p. 1017. "The Lord remember the
 "soul or spirit of Abba, Mr. N. the son of N. who is
 "gone into his world; wherefore I vow to give alms for
 "him, that for this, his soul may be bound up in the bun-
 "dle of life, with the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
 "Sarah and Rebecca, Rachael and Lea, and with the rest
 "of the righteous men and righteous women, who are
 "in the garden of Eden. Amen." These souls were not
 supposed to be in heaven, but in some place under
 ground, where they waited for the resurrection of the
 body. Such also was the idea of philosophizing christi-
 ans, for more than ten centuries after Christ. It by
 no means follows from this representation, which, from
 being at first merely figurative, was afterwards sup-
 posed to be real, that there is any such place as this pa-
 radise, or general receptacle of the dead, any more than
 there is such a place as heaven, where God dwells. These
 are only accommodations to our conception of things.
 The dead are merely deposited in the earth, some in one
 place, and some in another, and God is equally every
 where.

In this vision the apostle says he heard unspeakable
 words, meaning probably something that he was not
 permitted to divulge, being intended perhaps for his
 own use and encouragement. It is not said by whom
 these words were uttered, but it is probable it was by
 his guide in this vision, whether an angel or our Savi-
 our, and they might relate to the state of death, and
 that change which is to take place in them, and in the
 living also, at the last day; concerning which it is evi-
 dent that he had some revelation. For on this subject

he

he speaks with precision and authority, and delivers what he could not have known of himself.

Both these visions happened fourteen years before the writing of this epistle, which was A. D. 57; and this carries us back to the year 43, the year in which Paul visited Jerusalem along with Barnabas, to carry a contribution of money from Antioch to that place; and at this time he elsewhere informs us that he had a vision while he was praying in the temple. On this account it is most probable that it was nothing more than a vision, as he there calls it, tho' it was so distinct, that he could not at that time tell what it was. The modesty of the apostle appears in the circumstance of his concealing this vision so long, and nothing but this necessity induced him to speak of it at all. We can only conjecture about the reasons or subjects of these visions; but as Paul was at that time just entering upon his mission to the Gentiles, they might be designed to direct and encourage him in the prosecution of that work.

6. He did not wish to be considered in a higher light on account of these visions, but was content that men should judge of him by what they saw of him, and not by what he said of himself; and thus he continued fourteen years.

7. It is probable from several circumstances, that what Paul calls *a thorn in the flesh*, was some bodily infirmity which contributed to make him appear to disadvantage, especially as a speaker. Perhaps it was some paralytic affection, which might also be an impression made upon him by the vision. This he calls *a messenger of Satan*, as, in a figurative way of speaking, all evils

evils are referred to this source. But as the expression may be rendered, *that the messenger of Satan might buffet me*, he might by this allude to his enemies at Corinth, as the messengers of Satan, who took advantage, from his bodily infirmity, to slight and ridicule him. Thus this messenger of Satan will be an expression similar to that of our Saviour with respect to the Jews, who he said were *of their father the devil*, as all wicked men are, in the Old Testament, called *the sons of Belial*.

9. The person to whom Paul addressed himself at this time was probably Christ, whom he saw in his vision. But this is far from authorizing us to pray to Christ when we do not see him, and cannot know that he is present to hear us, or authorized to do any thing for us if he did : it is God only, that great Being who is styled the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and to whom he always prayed, that is the proper object of our prayers.

The apostle acquiesced in his infirmity, as thereby his success in preaching the gospel would not appear to be owing to any advantage of eloquence or personal influence, but merely to that supernatural power with which his preaching was accompanied.

13. There is a fine address in this ; the apostle intimating that his not taking any thing of them was a wrong done to themselves, as they would thereby appear to less advantage than other churches.

14. We have no account of more than one visit that the apostle paid to Corinth before this, but as he then
staid

staid two years at that place, it is possible that he might then make some considerable excursion from it, and return to it again, which would have been in fact a second visit. As in this epistle he speaks of his shipwrecks, it is not improbable that he had in this time visited Crete, where he had settled Titus.

By *laying up for his children*, the apostle could only mean his providing for their spiritual wants, as we may say, and therefore the observation does not seem to be quite pertinent, since the Corinthians might supply his wants, of one kind, and he supply their's of another.

16. This was an insinuation of some of his enemies, who said that his taking no money of the Corinthians was only an artifice, that he might get the more from them in some other way.

19. Here the apostle seems to revert to what he had said before, concerning the reason of his absenting himself so long from them, assuring them that there was no artifice in it, but that there was a serious reason for it, which he proceeds to mention.

20. These are all the natural consequences of faction and dissention, which both now, and afterwards, prevailed to a great degree in this church of Corinth, as appears by an epistle of Clement of Rome, written after this time.

21. We see by this, in how very imperfect a state the church of Corinth was at this time, which clearly shews that the belief of christianity did not operate immediately, as by a charm; which some pretend to be the case of faith at present; but gradually, good principles naturally leading to good conduct, and forming
good

good habits. But this is necessarily the work of time. Our Saviour compares the effect of the gospel to seed sown in the ground, and we know that all seeds require time to spring up and produce plants.

Ch. XIII. In the close of this epistle, Paul treats chiefly of his power, as an apostle, of inflicting punishments on the disorderly christians at Corinth; expressing, at the same time, his unwillingness to have recourse to it.

1. It appears to me, as I have observed, that Paul's residence at Corinth, on his first visit to that place, was divided into two principal parts, between which he visited Crete; so that the visit which he was now about to make there might be called his third.

In this it is probable he alluded to the occasion he should have to inquire into the cause of the factions and disturbances that were among them; assuring them that he would proceed with caution, and receive no charge that was not sufficient to prove it.

2. i. e. To use proper severity where it would appear to be necessary. Here the same visit, as it seems, is called the second, tho' just before he had called it the third, which it might be on the supposition of the former visit being divided into two parts.

3. One great objection to Paul at Corinth was, that he was not a regular apostle, and consequently had not the power and authority of one; tho' he thought he had given them sufficient proofs of it.

4. It is an usual figure of speech with Paul, tho' a pretty strong one, that christians are to be conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ; his death be-

ing an emblem of our dying to sin, and his resurrection of our living again unto God a new and better life. He seems to have had the same idea here. He had contented himself with appearing weak and inactive as Christ was when he suffered himself to be crucified, and lay in the grave, but now he would appear in life and vigour among them, as Christ had done after his resurrection.

5. Here the apostle seems to revert to the same figure with respect to the Corinthians, intimating that they also would have the experience of something resembling the death and resurrection of Christ, if they were christians in deed, and not in name only.

6. The word *reprobate* here signifies that which will not stand a test upon examination. Here he says that tho' they should not be able to stand this test as private christians, he was confident that he should stand the test as an apostle; having power, as such, to punish the refractory among them.

7. i. e. I wish you may give me no occasion to shew that I am an apostle, by punishing disorderly persons among you; for I had rather that your conduct was such as to require no animadversion, tho', in consequence of it, I should give no proof of my power as an apostle. Mr. W. renders *I pray God that he would do you no evil at all.* W.

8. He means it would not be in his power to make an improper use of his apostolical power in inflicting punishments. Indeed this power, like that of working beneficent miracles, tho' it might be said in one sense to belong to the apostles, being exerted when they spoke,

and

and indicated, as when Peter declared that Ananias and Sapphira would instantly die, and Paul, that Elymas would be struck with blindness, was not properly speaking at their command. On all these occasions, they only spake as they were prompted by the spirit of God at the time ; which indeed appears to have been the case with our Saviour himself, who had naturally no more power than any other prophet, or any other man, as he frequently declared.

9. i. e. When I shall appear without any power of punishing you, in consequence of your good conduct, which is called spiritual strength.

11. Rather, *mind the same thing*, which is the great object of all christians.

14. i. e. May all the blessings of the gospel, the love of God, and the participation of the gifts of his spirit, attend you all. For the phrase *holy spirit* has no other meaning in the New Testament. It never means any direct influence of God upon the mind, and such as many persons expect, even at this day. The knowledge of the gospel and the motives to virtue exhibited in it, are abundantly sufficient for us, and we have no reason given us to expect any thing more. We pray indeed for virtuous principles and habits, but it is as we pray for our daily bread; neither being imparted to us immediately from God, which would be a miracle, but being produced by our own labour and endeavours in the use of proper means to supply our own wants. But still, since all the powers we can exert, and all our opportunities of exerting them, are from God, it is to him that

our gratitude is due for every advantage that we procure for ourselves, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

AFTER writing the second epistle to the Corinthians, which was from Macedonia, Paul went as he had proposed to Corinth, where he made some stay, and it was during his residence in Corinth at this time, viz. A. D. 58, that he wrote this epistle to the Romans, the largest of all his epistles. He had never been at Rome himself, nor does it appear who had preached christianity in that city. But there being a continual conflux of persons, of all kinds, from all parts of the empire to Rome, nothing could be transacted in the most remote provinces, that would not be very soon known there; and christians, as well as other persons, having business in the Metropolis, their zeal would naturally prompt them to teach to others, what they knew and valued themselves; especially as the christian doctrines were then novel, and on that account excited the greater attention. Indeed the extent of the Roman empire, which comprehended almost all the civilized
part

part of the world, was a circumstance exceedingly favourable to the propagation of the gospel:

It appears however, from this epistle, that they were Jews who had been the most active in preaching the gospel at Rome, and that they had carried their Jewish prejudices along with them, but were not, as far as appears from this epistle, tinctured with any of the peculiar opinions of those who had opposed Paul at Ephesus and Corinth. They had, however, endeavoured to impose the yoke of the law of Moses upon the Gentile christians, and it was chiefly with a view to correct this great error that Paul, who was properly the apostle of the Gentiles, wrote this epistle.

The greatest part of this epistle is, therefore, argumentative ; and the subject of his discussion is such as, at this day, we have nothing to do with. The epistle, however, contains much useful incidental matter ; and it is an object of curiosity at least, to consider the principles on which he reasons, tho' his arguments are in many places extremely obscure, and in some cases, as I cannot help thinking, inconclusive. Those positions, however, for which he contends are undoubtedly just, and the cause for which he contended, was such as abundantly justified the zeal which he discovers in it.

The epistle begins with asserting his call as an apostle, and the extent of his commission, viz. to the whole Gentile world including Rome, the capital of the empire, and also with expressing a just sense of the value of the gospel which he preached, as it respected the whole world, Jews as well as Gentiles, both of whom stood in great need of it. To make the christians at Rome sensible

fible of this, he here gives a short, but very dark picture, of the state of the heathen world in general, in which mankind were addicted to all the vices that are here enumerated.

1. Paul writes the greatest part of this epistle, with a particular view to the Jewish teachers, many of whom he knew were ill affected to him in other places, and, therefore, might be so at Rome. They more particularly questioned his apostleship, as he had not been one of the original twelve, and they might say that there was no evidence but his own, that he was appointed to be one. He had, however, the strongest of all evidence, and to this he frequently appeals, viz. his power as an apostle, evidenced by signs of a miraculous nature.

3. All these circumstances are calculated to recommend the gospel to the Jews, as by them it appeared that Jesus, the founder of it, was the Messiah, promised to them by their prophets.

4. The term, *son of God*, signifies in general, a person particularly favoured by God, sometimes an angel, and sometimes a prophet. Christ was declared to be the son of God, or a distinguished prophet, and God gave an attestation to his divine mission, by the miraculous gifts which were bestowed upon him, usually called the *gifts of the spirit*, and in this place *the spirit of holiness*, or the holy spirit; but the more particular attestation of his divine mission, was his resurrection from the dead, an event which he had himself foretold, as intended to answer this purpose.

6. i. e. From him I have received the favour of an
apostleship

apostleship with respect to the whole Gentile world, which includes the people at Rome.

7. *Saints* meant originally, persons set apart as devoted to God, and thereby distinguished from others. The Jews had been in that situation, and in a similar one are all christians.

11. As no apostle had been at Rome, and the gifts of the spirit were not usually communicated but by apostles, it having pleased God to distinguish those extraordinary ministers by that privilege, the christians at Rome had hitherto wanted that confirmation of the gospel, which those at Corinth, and other places, where Paul had preached, had been possessed of.

12. i. e. That we may confirm one another in the faith and hope of the gospel.

14. I consider myself as devoted to the service of all men in the gospel, without any distinction of Greeks, or Barbarians, learned or unlearned.

16. Here, *the power of God*, may mean simply, a great, extraordinary, and effectual power. But all power is from God, and this was the power that God more particularly employed to reform and save the world.

17. For in the-gospel is revealed to us the method by which God saves sinners : and this has always been by what is called faith. It was so in the time of the prophets, for Habakkuk says, *the just shall live by faith*. This was intended to caution the christians at Rome not to think that their acceptance with God depended upon their submitting to the law of Moses, since even under that law, men were not justified by any thing pe-

cular to it, but by those principles which are inculcated in the gospel. The prophet Habakkuk, in the passage here referred to, says that we must patiently wait the fulfilment of God's promises, exercising faith in his veracity; and faith of this kind is the great principle of all religion, viz. a firm belief in the being, perfections, and moral government of God.

The apostle now proceeds to shew that all men stand in need of the gospel, in order to be reformed, and thereby brought into a state of favour with God.

19. Mr. W. according to the Ethiopic version translates, *They shew not that knowledge of God which is displayed to them by God himself.* W.

22. The philosophers in the heathen world countenanced the idolatry of the vulgar, and in general, their systems were but little favourable to the doctrine of a providence here, or a state of rewards and punishments hereafter.

25. i. e. Instead of the creator, or to the neglect of the creator. This has been the case with respect to every species of idolatry, even the christian, in the church of Rome. The attention of persons in that communion is almost wholly engrossed with the inferior objects of worship, so that they seldom pray to, or think of, the Supreme Being, but habitually address themselves to the virgin Mary, or to some particular saint, that they have a fancy for, and who they think attends to the situation they are in.

28. It is perfectly consistent with the maxims of God's moral government, that men should only have a limited

limited means of improvement, and they who neglect these are justly left to themselves. Indeed, since life is limited, the day of grace, as it is called, must be limited too, and vice and bad habits contribute not a little to limit it still more, by making more time and labour necessary to reformation. And the rules of government with respect to nations, and the whole race of mankind, are the same with those which respect individuals.

32. i. e. They were arrived at the highest degree of profligacy. This picture certainly does not belong to all the heathen world, but the vices here enumerated were very general; and what particularly deserves our attention, some of the most unnatural of them, the very mention of which is hardly proper at this day, were countenanced by the popular religion of the heathen world, and practiced in the recesses of their temples as parts of their worship. To these abominations in public, which certainly gave countenance to the same things in private, christianity happily put an end; and it is to be hoped, that in due time, it will put an end to vice and wickedness of every kind, public and private.

Ch. II. The great object of the apostle in this epistle was to repress the pride of the Jewish teachers, who had imposed upon the Gentile converts the observance of all the law of Moses. These Jews held the Gentiles in great contempt, and thought them unworthy of the divine favour. In every thing, therefore, that the apostle had hitherto said of the vices of the heathen world

world, the Jews would readily agree with him, and especially those of them whose own characters and conduct were the most reprehensible. The apostle, therefore, proceeding in his argument to shew the value of the gospel, observes, that the Jews, all circumstances considered, were no better than the Gentiles, and stood in as great need of the gospel. And, supposing these censures of the Gentile world, to have been urged with the greatest vehemence, by such of the Jews as had nothing to plead besides their attachment to the law; such as those who opposed our Saviour, whose religion was a mere cloak to their vices, the apostle here declaims, with great force and justice, against their conduct, in censuring others for those very vices, to which they themselves were notoriously addicted. After this he shews, with great propriety, that all mankind will be judged according to the advantages they have enjoyed; the Gentiles according to the law of nature, and the Jews by the law of Moses.

1. This is not to be understood as if every Jew, who could take upon himself to censure the Gentile world, was guilty of the vices he is about to mention, but that the most censorious of them often were; and to such characters he has a view in what follows.

6. This is excellent moral preaching, very forcible and very clear. Here the apostle intimates that men will be judged according to their works only, and the divine favour dispensed, not, as the Jews fondly imagined, according to external privileges.

8 By *contentious*, he evidently has a view to the temper of the Jews, who always shewed a refractory disposition,

disposition, an instance of which, was their giving the apostle endless trouble by their opposition to him.

9. Here the apostle observes, that the Jews, instead of being spared as such, would be punished in the first place, and with more severity than the Gentiles; whereas it was the opinion of many of the Jews, that hardly any Israelite would be finally rejected of God, and none but those who were guilty of the most atrocious crimes.

10. Here the apostle allows that those Jews who improved their greater privileges, would have the advantage of the virtuous Gentiles. Indeed all privileges, properly improved, exalt the character, and make it more worthy of the divine favour, otherwise there would be no use in revelation, nor would men have any advantage over brutes. It is true that less is expected of them, but then they are capable of less. This is an universal rule, applicable to men with respect to brutes, of Jews with respect to Gentiles, and of christians with respect to the rest of the world. Their superior knowledge, well improved, will make them superior beings, compared to what they would have been capable of without that knowledge, tho' they made the most of what they had before.

16. Here we see most clearly, that according to this apostle, the Gentile world is far from being, necessarily, in a state of condemnation. All men know more or less of their duty from the light of nature, and tho' Christ will judge the world, it will be in righteousness, and therefore every man will be treated according to the advantages he has enjoyed.

Mr.

Mr. W. connects this verse with v. 12. and by that means saves a long parenthesis.

17. The Jews boasted of God, as their God, in a peculiar sense, which indeed he was, standing in a peculiar relation to them, and of this they were justly proud; but then that consideration ought not to have led them to rest there, but it should have been a motive with them to act in a manner worthy of that honourable distinction.

20. In this manner the Jews described themselves with respect to the rest of the world.

22. Many of the Jews, and the most distinguished for their bigoted attachment to the law, and their supercilious contempt of the Gentile world, were according to the evidence of Josephus, their own historian, as well as that of the gospel history, notoriously addicted to the grossest vices.

Some christians might perhaps think it no great crime to steal what was consecrated to idolatrous uses.

24. i. e. As it appears to have been often done in the course of the Jewish history.

29. i. e. He will not receive any advantage as a Jew, or on account of his being one, who is merely a Jew by birth, and has not improved the advantages which he enjoyed as a disciple of Moses. This maxim, moreover, easily applies to christianity. To be a christian in name only, will not avail a man any thing. Nay, it will be of a disservice to him, and increase his condemnation, since the knowledge of the great truths of it necessarily adds to his obligations, while he neglects to fulfil them.

When

When such persons shall plead at the last day their relation to Christ, he will say unto them, *verily, I know you not, depart from me all you workers of iniquity.*

Ch. III. The apostle proceeds to urge the necessity of the gospel to the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles, shewing, that notwithstanding their advantage in a divine revelation, many of them were exceedingly corrupt. He therefore asserts a method of justification independent of the law of Moses.

1. Having shewn in the former part of this epistle, that those Jews who thought themselves the most superior to the Gentiles, were in fact no better than themselves, and that God will finally judge every man according to the advantages that he has enjoyed, the Gentiles by the law of nature, and the Jews by that of Moses, a Jew is here introduced objecting to him, and saying, that, if this be the case, the Jews derive no benefit from their divine religion.

2. There is always a real advantage in superior knowledge, because it puts it into men's power to become greater and happier than they could have been without that knowledge. It is a true maxim of Lord Bacon, that knowledge is power, and if this be the case with respect to natural knowledge, it is much more so with respect to religious knowledge, A true knowledge of God, of his perfections and moral government, of the conditions on which we live here, of the proper duties of life, and of our expectations after death, is such knowledge as tends most of all to ennoble men's minds, to enlarge their views, and thereby make them superior beings to those who have never been taught

taught to look any farther than the present world ; who have no knowledge of the true end of their being, and of the government under which they live.

3. The term faith has two significations, viz. mere belief or assent to the truth, and also fidelity, faithfulness, or being true to a promise and engagement. This apostle, as well as other ancient writers, seems to have been too fond of what we now call a play upon words, using the same term in different senses, which, tho' it may sometimes amuse and entertain, yet too often misleads the reader. In the former part of this verse, the word faith, is used in the first of the above mentioned senses, viz. for mere belief, and in the latter part in the second of them, viz. fidelity. What the apostle says is, shall the want of faith in man frustrate the faith of God ? but the meaning is, will it follow that because the Jews have been deficient in faith by not becoming christians, God did not intend a real benefit to the Jews, by favouring them with the communication of the gospel, as well as with that of the law, according to his original promise of special favour to the posterity of Abraham ?

4 i. e. We must, at all events, acquit the dispensations of providence. He being perfectly good and just; cannot do an unkind or unjust thing.

5. I speak freely, as with a man. W.

Here is the same play upon the word righteous and righteousness in this verse, as on the word faith in the preceding, the apostle says, if our unrighteousness occasion a display of the righteousness of God, must he not be unrighteous, or unreasonable in punishing us. The meaning

meaning is, if the conduct of divine providence be not only acquitted, but made to appear to more advantage; for if this circumstance was not in the apostle's idea, tho' it is not expressed, his argument has no force; it must be unreasonable in him to punish those who have been the means of bringing him so much glory.

6. This again is an answer from the known character of God, and the presumption that he will certainly act a just and righteous part.

7. Here the objection is repeated, and with the same play upon words; truth in one sense being opposed to lie in another sense. The meaning is, if my want of faith in the gospel, be the means of bringing about the designs of God, why does he blame me who am the instrument in carrying on his purpose?

8. i. e. If what the apostle says be true, the Jew replies that doing evil in general, will be justified out of regard to the good that results from it. This the apostle says, would be a false inference; but he only asserts it, without assigning any reason. The reason, however, is sufficiently obvious; for men ought to be judged according to the principles of their conduct, and the disposition of mind by which they are actuated, without regard to consequences, which were not designed or desired by them. Thus, if the Jews from unreasonable obstinacy, and under the influence of bad passions, rejected the gospel, they will be justly punished for their unbelief, and refusing the offers made to them by God, tho' their unbelief should answer ever so valuable a purpose in the general plan of his providence. That the general infidelity of the Jews does answer an excellent

least purpose, in the plan of divine providence, is very obvious. For had the bulk of the Jewish nation, and especially the rulers of it become christians, at the first promulgation of the gospel, it would at this day, and in all future time, have been objected to christianity, that it was a scheme of the heads of the nation, and that the whole business being transacted where they had authority, it was in their power to impose upon the people whatever they pleased. Whereas, as the case really was, there was a sufficient number of Jewish converts to prove, that the evidence of the miracles and the resurrection of Christ must have been able to have overcome the most deeprooted prejudices, such as all the Jews had to a suffering Messiah, as Jesus was ; and yet the scheme had no advantage whatever, but what its own merit and evidence gave it.

The apostle now reverts to what he had before urged, viz. that the Jews stood in as much need of the gospel as the Gentiles.

19. The propriety of these quotations from the Old Testament is not very apparent. They are chiefly the invectives of David and others against their personal enemies, and, therefore, cannot prove that the Jewish nation in general was no better than he had described the heathen world to be, in the first chapter of this epistle, tho' this seems to have been his object. These passages were certainly found in the sacred books of the Jews, called, in general, the law, but they do not contain a character of all who were under the law. They shew, however, that notwithstanding the advantages which the Jews had from divine revelation, there was much

much wickedness among them, and, therefore, that some farther instruction, such as the gospel afforded, was needful.

It may also be observed, that neither with respect to the Jews nor Gentiles, could the generality, the great mass or bulk of the people, have consisted of such profligate characters as the apostle describes, for then society could not have subsisted. But what is of chief importance, tho' not mentioned by the apostle, is that some of the worst vices which he here enumerates, were connived at in the worship of the heathen gods; prostitution, and worse than that, being practiced in their very temples, and in honour of their gods; whereas all impurity, as well as cruelty, was forbidden in the laws of Moses, so that when the Jews were guilty of those vices, they were much more cruel than the Gentiles, whose very religion favoured them.

The apostle having shewn that both Jews and Gentiles were equally sinners, and therefore stood in equal need of some new means of reformation, proceeds to argue more at large, that the Jewish law was insufficient for this purpose, and that the Jews themselves must have recourse to another as a means of recommending themselves to God, the principles of which were independent of the observance of the law of Moses, though perfectly agreeable to it, and to the doctrine of the prophets.

20. The law, of which the Jews made so great boast, did not, in itself considered, contain any thing more than the injunction of certain duties, and the appoint-

ment of certain penalties; but, by informing them concerning their duty, made their transgressions of it more aggravating.

21. The *righteousness of God* here means God's method of administration, in determining when men are righteous; or the laws and rules according to which he acquits sinners.

22. i. e. The method which God has taken to promote the reformation of the world, is by the preaching of the gospel, which promises the divine favour to all who are truly penitent, Gentiles as well as Jews, without distinction.

24. *Redemption* means simply deliverance, and that deliverance from sin and the penalties due to it, which is taught in the gospel, is dependent upon the repentance of the sinner, and the free mercy of God preached in the gospel, and, before, in the law of Moses. You will observe that nothing is here said of men's being justified by the righteousness of Christ. It is the uniform language of scripture, and the dictates of common sense, that every man should be condemned for his own sins, and rewarded for his own virtues, and not those of another. Nothing, therefore, can be more void of foundation, than the opinion of many, that mankind are properly punished for the sin of Adam, so as to be liable to the wrath of God even in a future world, on that account, his sin being imputed to them; or that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who are saved; and that they are saved and received into heaven on that account only.

25. This

25. This should have been rendered the propitiatory, or as it is called, in the Old Testament, the mercy's seat on the ark of the covenant. This was sprinkled with blood once a year, and Christ having died a violent death, the apostle, by way of figure, represents his blood as sprinkled upon it; and from this mercy seat he represents God as declaring his will, and promising his favour, to all that are truly penitent. All this, however, is only figurative language, and will by no means authorize us to infer, that Christ died a proper sacrifice in our stead, our sins being imputed to him, and he suffering the wrath of God on that account, as many imagine. He was a sacrifice, as any good man, dying in a good cause, may be said to die a sacrifice to that cause, giving up his life in consequence of his adherence to it. *κερσον* or *θυμα* being understood, *ελασμηριον*, may signify a *propitiatory sacrifice*, and under this idea the death of Jesus is represented in the epistle to the Hebrews.

26. i. e. He is righteous; or his proceedings are not to be censured, tho' he now by the gospel, receives into his favour all who embrace it, tho' they should not conform to the law of Moses.

28. i. e. By complying with the terms of the gospel which are repentance and reformation, and not the observance of the laws of Moses.

30. i. e. The ground of justification in the sight of God has always been faith, or a belief in the Divine promises, which leads to the observance of the commandments; and this has in fact been the same in every dispensation of religion.

31. The gospel teaching a method of justifying sinners, upon principles common to it, and to the law of Moses, rightly understood, is not the abrogation of the law, but a confirmation of it.

THE PARAPHRASE.

We see then from a view of the state of the world, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, that they must all be considered as guilty, and liable to condemnation ; and as to the law, which the Jews make so much boast of, it can only aggravate their condemnation, because it so clearly points out to them those duties which they have neglected. But now, God has provided a remedy for the moral disorders of the world, by the gospel, independent of the law, and which was indeed announced to mankind in the law and the prophets themselves, in which was foretold the reformation, and future happy state of the world under the Messiah. It is that method of promoting virtue and holiness by the gospel, the benefits of which extend to all who receive it, without any distinction of Jew or Gentile. For, as I have shewn, all the world stand in equal need of the gospel, because all have sinned, and have not glorified God by a course of obedience to his law. They must therefore be justified, not as innocent persons in consequence of their observance of any law, but through the free mercy of God, on the terms of the gospel, which require repentance.

For in this manner is God effecting the deliverance of the world, from its present sinful state, by Jesus Christ, whom he had exhibited to all the world, that,

as from a mercy seat sprinkled with his blood, God might declare his acceptance of all who receive and obey the gospel, in consequence of which all their past sins will be forgiven; that in this age of the world he might by him publish his method of justifying sinners that he might display the equity of his proceedings, in receiving into his favour all the true disciples of Christ.

Of what then ought we to make our boast? Of the law of Moses, which in itself considered, only enjoins certain duties with penalties annexed, or of the law, which it may be called, of faith which promises forgiveness upon repentance? Of the latter no doubt. I therefore conclude, that men are justified or approved of God in consequence of their receiving and obeying the gospel, without any regard to the law of Moses. Otherwise God, the maker of all, would be the God of the Jews only, whereas, he stands in the same relation of God and Father to all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews. For he is the same righteous being who receives into his favour both Jews and Gentiles, and upon the same terms; which may be said to be faith and obedience to his will, upon their firm belief of the promises of his favour to them on that condition. Can it then be said that I abolish the law by the preaching of the gospel, tho' it does not require the observance of the law? Nay, by this very conduct, I, in effect establish the law, which when rightly understood, approves of the method of justification published in the gospel.

Ch. IV. The apostle prosecutes his argument to prove, that the observance of the Jewish law, was not the original, or proper method of justification in the

fight of God, nor indeed any thing that bore the name of law, exclusive of every thing else. Abraham, he shews, was approved by God, for an act of faith, antecedent to his being circumcised, on which account he is to be considered as the father, or pattern, of all who distinguish themselves by faith in God, whether they be of his natural posterity or not, and that the blessings promised to his seed, belong to those his spiritual children, as well as to his natural descendants.

That the blessings, and the greatest blessings, will be secured by imitating the faith of Abraham, and thus making him our spiritual father, cannot be doubted, but that these are the very blessings promised to Abraham, in the particular covenant which God made to him, cannot be supposed, because, they were all of a temporal nature; and yet this is what the apostle seems to assert in this epistle, and more expressly still in that to the Galatians. But he could not seriously mean any thing more than that the blessings of the new covenant would be secured by imitating the faith of Abraham, as were those of the old, in consequence of being his natural descendants.

i. i. e. What shall we think of the blessings conferred on Abraham, from whom we Jews are descended?

This may be rendered, *our father according to the flesh*, the words easily admitting this transposition.

8. The apostle here shews, that men who have been sinners, cannot be justified in the sight of God, by the law of Moses, or by any mere law whatever. For, that with respect to moral characters all men are sinners,
and

and, therefore, have no method of reinstating themselves in the divine favour, but by repentance, which his free mercy will accept, instead of sinless obedience.

12. Abraham himself, the apostle here shews, was justified, or approved of God, for what was done by him before he was circumcised, and long before the law of Moses existed, and, therefore, they who are now uncircumcised, may likewise recommend themselves to God, by a virtue similar to his.

14. Here the apostle seems to say more than his argument requires, it being sufficient, that sinners obtain the divine favour, by that kind of faith in God which recommended Abraham to him. But certainly, Abraham's natural posterity, were the seed to which the blessings of the original covenant with him were promised. For the principal of them is the possession of the land of Canaan, which was designed for none but the Jews, and could not be the property of all mankind.

17. As it was the law of which the Jews made so great a boast, it was certainly very proper for them to be informed, that, all men being sinners, no man can be justified on account of the observance of any law, that of Moses not excepted, and therefore, that with respect to the favour of God, the Jews were upon the same footing with the rest of the world, since they also must repent, and have recourse to the free mercy of God.

22. It is with the greatest propriety that the apostle here urges that act of faith in God, which preceded the circumcision of Abraham, and much more the institution of the law of Moses, in order to abate the excessive pride of the Jews on account of that law.

25. It is so common with this apostle to represent Christ as a pattern, or emblem, to us in his death and resurrection, that I cannot help thinking he had the same meaning here, and therefore, that he intended only to say, that the death of Christ ought to remind us of our dying to sin, and his resurrection of our rising to a new life, and that this was one object and end of his death and resurrection. That Christ died for our offences in the literal sense of the word, as if he had been considered as guilty of our sins and punished for them, is so contrary to reason, and the general tenor of scripture, that it is not on any account to be admitted as the apostle's meaning, whatever other interpretations be put upon his words, or tho' we should not be able to find any meaning in them at all.

THE PARAPHRASE.

What then shall we say with respect to the blessings bestowed by God upon Abraham, who is our father according to the flesh, being our natural progenitor, so that by his example, we may form some idea of the terms on which his posterity will be justified with God. If this our great ancestor was justified by such works as the Jews boast of, by obedience to a ceremonial law, he might claim his reward as of merit. But this does not appear to have been the case between God and him. For the scripture only says, that Abraham believed in God, and this his faith was accounted to him for righteousness, or God was pleased to accept of it, so that it was of the good pleasure of God that he was received into

in his favour. But had his acceptance been on account of any works performed by him, such works as properly entitled him to it, it would not have been any favour at all, but the discharge of a debt on the part of God. Whereas to him who has no plea of this kind; but of whom it is only said that he believed in God, who justifies even those who have been ungodly, if they become penitent, his mere faith, in the divine promise, is all the merit than he can claim.

David also gives an account of the happiness of the man, of whom it cannot be said that he was justified by works, for he supposes him to have been a sinner, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, or who will not condemn him for the sins that he has formerly committed.

Are they then those of the circumcision only, who can expect this favour from God, or the uncircumcised as well as they, when it was by such faith, as the uncircumcised are capable of, that Abraham himself was justified? Can it be said that he was accepted of God in a state of circumcision? By no means, because he was then uncircumcised, and his circumcision was in consequence of that faith in God which he had shewn while he was uncircumcised, that he might be the father, or pattern, of all who shall shew the same faith, tho' they like him should be uncircumcised, that they may be justified by God as he was. And tho' he is called the father of circumcision, this is not confined to the mere carnal circumcision, but extends to that of the heart

heart, which is effected by an imitation of that faith which Abraham shewed while he was uncircumcised.

The promise which was made to Abraham, which insured to his posterity the most distinguished rank, and the happiest lot in this world, was not made to him on account of circumcision, or of a ritual law, which was not then established; but on account of that kind of righteousness which consists in faith, or such virtues as are independent of the ceremonial law. For if the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant, is to be confined to the law of Moses, the promise would not have been made, in consequence of an act of faith, which preceded the institution of it.

A law, strictly speaking, and the idea and the great boasting of the Jews does not go beyond what they call the law, can only produce wrath by making the transgressors obnoxious to punishment. The promise was, therefore, made to be the reward of the faith of Abraham, that it might be considered as a matter of favour, and that it might descend to all those who may be said in one sense, to be of the seed of Abraham, tho' they be not naturally descended from him, but only called his sons, as imitators of his faith, in which sense he may be said to be the father of all the faithful, Gentiles as well as Jews. For according to the language of scripture, he is to be the father, not of one nation only, but of many, in consequence of his firm faith in the promise of God, that he should have a child, when, by the course of nature, he could not.

This divine approbation of the faith of Abraham was not recorded as a thing that respected himself only,
but

but as an example to us, who shall be equally favoured of God if we believe in the gospel, having faith in the resurrection of Christ, who was given up to death as an example to us to die unto sin, and who rose again as an emblem of our rising to a new and better life.

Ch. V. The apostle having shown, that the observance of the law of Moses, is not necessary to the justification of sinners, but that the terms of the gospel alone are abundantly sufficient for that purpose, extends his commendation of the gospel to other particulars, as; that it not only gives men assurance of the pardon of sin, but enables them to bear persecution with the greatest fortitude and joy. He rejoices in the consideration of the death of Christ, the superlative merit of which consisted in his dying for men while they were sinners, or in a state of rebellion against God; and he shews how, by the obedience of Christ, all the consequences of the sin of Adam are removed; and even, that the benefit arising from the death of Christ, far exceeds the injury received by means of the sin of Adam.

5. The gifts of the holy spirit were tokens of the peculiar presence and favour of God, confirming men's faith in the gospel, and their expectations from it.

7. i. e. A generous public spirited man; it being very possible that one man may sacrifice his life for the sake of that of another, which he may think to be of more value to the world than his own.

10. If we received so great favours by means of the death of Christ, while we were his enemies, much more advantage may we expect from his life, now that we are his

his friends. We here see the fondness of this writer for antithesis, to which he often sacrificed the perspicuity of his reasoning.

11. This is the only place in the New Testament in which the word *atonement* occurs. The same word, in the original, is, in all other places, rendered *reconciliation*, and so it ought to have been here, the meaning of the apostle being, that we are reconciled to God by means of Christ, or in consequence of believing and obeying the gospel; and not by his making atonement for our sins by his death.

12. Sin, and the punishment for sin, are often used promiscuously. And literally, what the apostle here says, could not be true, it not being possible that we should sin in Adam, so as to be guilty of a sin, and punishable for it, but we may suffer in consequence of it, as children often do in consequence of the sins of their parents. Thus here the apostle supposed, after Moses, that mankind in general became mortal in consequence of the sin of Adam.

From this verse to the eighteenth is a kind of parenthesis, intended to prove that the mortality of man is really owing to the sin of Adam, and not the punishment of any other sin.

14. To prove that the mortality of man is owing to the sin of Adam, the apostle supposes death to be universally the punishment of some sin, which however is more than we are authorized to assert, since brutes, which are incapable of sin, nevertheless die, and men died when there was no law existing by which they could

could be subject to death as a penalty. This observation, however, does not seem sufficiently to the purpose, for before the law, and after it, men died upon the same accounts, viz. the general constitution of nature. According to the Mosaic history of the fall, the apostle's conclusion is undoubtedly true, and did not want this medium of proof.

17. Here we see the apostle's fondness for antithesis, and the intricacy and confusion of ideas that are sometimes the consequence of it. He opposes the offence of one man, to the obedience of another man, the one offence of Adam, by which we suffered, to the many offences removed by Christ; and simple death in one case, to eternal life in the other. We see, however, that in all this the apostle considered Christ as being a man, as much as Adam was. It is the offence of one man, and the obedience of another man, that he is contrasting. Had the nature of Christ been different from that of Adam, he would, no doubt, have contrasted those likewise, so fond he appeared to be of these antitheses or oppositions, and in this particular case noting as many of them as he could. He had the same idea of Christ, when he said on another occasion, as by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

18. Here the apostle shews, that as the consequence of the sin of Adam, was the mortality of all his race, so the consequence of the obedience of Christ, is the resurrection of all mankind from the grave. *Justification of life*, therefore, only means the reversing of the sentence

tence of the condemnation passed upon Adam, by which the life which was lost by the one, was recovered by the other.

19. Being *made sinners*, here only means, being made subject to death, and being *made righteous*, means the reversing of that sentence, by restoring men to life.

20. Here the apostle reverts to the consideration of the law of Moses, which, containing a clear revelation of the will of God, made all offences more aggravated. But the more aggravated are the sins of men, the more valuable is the gospel, informing us how we may be restored to the favour of God, viz. by repentance.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Being therefore justified on the terms of the gospel, without any regard to the law of Moses, we are in a state of peace and favour with God through Jesus Christ, by whose means alone, viz. by only believing and obeying his gospel, we are admitted to this state of favour, and rejoice in the hope of future glory. We even rejoice in our present sufferings, well knowing, that they naturally exercise and improve us in the virtue of patience. By this means we enlarge our experience of the wisdom and goodness of God in the dispensation of his providence, and this strengthens our hope and expectations of future blessings, which hope we are confident will not be disappointed, because we have even at present a sure token of the favour of God to us in the gift of the holy spirit.

This

This instance of the love of God to man, was manifested in the most seasonable time, when the world was in a most sinful and deplorable state. And so far were we from having merited this favour, that Christ gave his life even for those who were then sinners. This far exceeds any example of generosity among men. With them it is very rare for any one to risque his life, even for the best and most deserving of men, and hardly ever, for those whose characters are merely blameless; whereas the love of Christ was so much superior, that he even died for us, while we were sinners, and deserving of punishment.

Christ then having given his life, in publishing his gospel, by our obedience to which we are reconciled to God, so that we may be said to be saved by his death, much more benefit may we expect from his life, and that, as he now lives, he will exert his power in our favour, to rescue us from all the miseries that threaten us in a future state. For if we were brought from a state of enmity to a state of friendship with God, by the death of Christ, much more may we now hope, that being friends, he will by his life, do us more essential service.

But not only are we brought into this state of hope and pleasing expectation, but even to a state of triumph by the gospel of Christ, through which we are thus reconciled to God. To compare then what we gain by Christ, with what we lost by Adam, I would observe, that by the latter, sin and death, the consequence of sin, were brought into the world; for all men die in consequence of his sin, being thereby excluded from access

to the tree of life, which was intended to preserve men from death.

That men do die in consequence of the sin of Adam, is evident from this consideration, that there was death in the world before the promulgation of the law of Moses but men are not punished for the breach of a law which had no existence, and yet men died in the interval between Adam and Moses; so that death took place upon those who had not themselves incurred it by their personal transgression of any law, like to that which was given to Adam, whom I am now comparing with Christ, who was then to come. There is, however, this remarkable difference between the injury we receive from Adam, and the benefit conferred by Christ. Many die in consequence of the sin of one man, viz. Adam, and the blessing which God has conferred by means of another man, Christ, extends also to many, so that thus far, there is a correspondence between the evil resulting from the sin of one man, and the benefit accruing to us from the obedience of another man. But the difference consists in this, that the offence of Adam, by which the evil incurred, was one, and affected many, whereas the benefit, removes the effect, not only of that one offence of Adam, but of many transgressions, committed by many persons. For, if by one transgression of one man temporal death was introduced, much more shall they who receive all the blessings of the gospel, and justification in the sight of God, be made partakers of eternal life by another one man, Jesus Christ. Having established this point, I shall now return to my argument.

Am

As therefore, all men suffer death for the offence of one man, so all receive life in consequence of the obedience of another man. For as in consequence of the disobedience of one man, all men were treated as if they had been sinners, being subject to mortality, so in consequence of the obedience of another man, they are treated as if they had been righteous, the former sentence of death being reversed, and all being raised to immortal life.

As to the law of Moses, it tends to aggravate the guilt of those who are subject to it, but the more sin abounds the greater is that mercy of God displayed in the gospel, by which those sins are pardoned. Thus, as the sin of Adam introduced death, so the obedience of Christ, secures to all his faithful followers eternal life.

Ch. VI. The apostle having represented the gospel as particularly adapted to the case of a sinful world, he answers an objection that might be made to this account of it, as encouraging those sins for which it provided a pardon; and it is very possible that the captious Jews, made this objection to christianity, when it was represented as opposed to the law of which they made so great a boast. The apostle answers the objection by shewing that it is contrary to the nature of the gospel to encourage sin, and that the very rite of baptism, by which we take upon us the profession of christianity, is calculated to be an emblem of this. He also shews that by becoming christians, we change our masters, passing from the servitude of sin to the service of God and virtue.

5. If we have resembled him. W.

VOL. IV,

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This

This argument, if it may be called one, to prove that christians should live a new life from the ceremony of baptism, as being a representation of the death and resurrection of Christ, is very common with the apostle; the being plunged in water, in which manner baptism was, at least generally, administered, representing death, or a death unto sin, and the rising out of the water, representing the resurrection, or the living a new and virtuous life.

6. The death of which the apostle makes baptism to be an emblem, was the death of sin in ourselves; and our emblematical resurrection, is a resurrection to a new and virtuous life.

9. As Christ died but once, so christians should die to sin only once, so as to have no occasion to die in this manner a second time; but that having begun to live a new and virtuous life, they should continue in it.

10. As we are said to die to sin in one sense of the phrase, so Christ may also be said to have died to sin, tho' in another sense of it, as he died in consequence of that sin which entailed death upon all men, or to put an end to sin in others, but he lives again by the power of God in his resurrection.

15. Here the apostle reverts to his former consideration of christians not being subject to the law of Moses, but to a dispensation that made provision for the pardon of sin; and this occasions a repetition of the objection with which this chapter opened, and upon this he observes, that by becoming christians we do not become

come our own masters, but that having quitted the service of sin, we become the servants of God, and therefore should commence a life of virtue.

21. Here the apostle draws a striking comparison between the service of sin, and that of God and virtue, to the unspeakable advantage of the latter.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I have observed that the grace of God in the gospel is the more manifest, in proportion to the guilty state of the world in which it was promulgated. Some may therefore say, that we may continue in sin, in order that the grace of God may abound the more in the forgiveness of it. But this would be an inference as absurd as it is shocking, for if we be christians, we are to be considered as absolutely dead to sin, and therefore incapable of living any longer in it.

Are you not also apprized, that the very rite of baptism, is a representation of the death of Christ. Being therefore buried as he was in our baptism, we should likewise resemble him in his resurrection to a new and immortal life. For, if we be confirmed to him in the one, we must likewise be so in the other. As therefore Christ was crucified, so every thing sinful in us, every thing that constituted our former sinful heathen state, should be crucified, implying the death and destruction of sin; so that our obligation to serve sin, as a master, ceases; for death cancels all obligation of servitude.

Being therefore dead as Christ was, we must also live as he does. But it is to be observed, that Christ died only once, and was then raised to immortal life. For Christ himself, tho' he was sinless, may be said to have died on account of sin, being subject to death, which was the original punishment of sin, and likewise to put away the sins of others; but his life being owing to the immediate power of God, is a life due to God and devoted to him. In like manner you also, in consequence of being conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ, should consider yourselves as once and for ever dead with respect to sin, and alive with respect to God, so as to be devoted to him by means of the gospel.

Let not sin, therefore, tyrannize over you, not even over your bodies, which are subject to death, and do not yield to its dictates. Let not your bodies be at the command of sin, and used for the base purposes of that master, but give yourselves up to the service of God, as those who are dead with respect to their former master, that your bodies may be employed as instruments in the service of God and virtue. There is no reason whatever that sin should be considered as your master, since you are not under the law, which as I have shewn, aggravates the offences that are committed under it, but under the gospel which promises forgiveness to penitents.

Some, however, as I have observed before, may say, that, enjoying the benefit of this merciful dispensation, we may sin with the greater assurance of pardon. But, consider again, that you are still servants, and tho' you have

have changed masters, are under as strict obligation of obedience as ever. Through the mercy of God, in the dispensation of the gospel, you are freed from the dominion of sin, but are thereupon become the servants of righteousness. I use this familiar comparison that you may be convinced how fair and reasonable it is, that as in your former heathen state, you were in fact the slaves of sin, you should now be as much devoted to your new master. While you were in the service of sin, you considered yourselves as under no obligation to do what virtue required of you. In like manner you are now under no obligation to do what sin may require of you.

That you may acquiesce with the more satisfaction in this determination, consider the difference of the two services. What advantage do you derive from that service, of which you must acknowledge that you are now ashamed, and which would have led to death and destruction, whereas in your new service, which commenced upon your freedom from that of sin, you do that which redounds to your honour here and to your immortal happiness hereafter. For the wages that sin gives to her slaves, is death, but the reward which God freely bestowes upon his servants is that eternal life, to which you will be raised by Christ at his second glorious coming.

Ch. VII. The apostle having answered the objection to christianity as leaving men more at liberty to sin, by supposing that by taking upon us the christian profession we virtually die unto sin and become the servants of a new master, pursues this figure of speech farther, re-

presenting sin as something within a man, different from himself, and controlling his natural wishes and desires. He also compares the connection between a man and this allegorical personage within him to the relation of marriage, and observes that upon the death of either of the parties, which in this case is that of sin, the contract is abrogated.

1. Not the law of Moses in particular, but any law in general, the universal law of contracts.

4. Here the apostle has recourse to that figure of speech which is so frequent with him, making the death of Christ to be an emblem of our dying to sin.

6. *That being dead wherein we were held*, means the body of sin, which the apostle represents as a person to whom we were contracted, and it is supposed to die in consequence of our embracing and obeying the gospel, which of course destroys every thing sinful within us.

According to the ancient versions, Mr. W. renders, *But now we are released by death from that law by which we were bound.* W.

8. *Sin* is here represented not only as another person within a man, but as wishing to do him a mischief, leading him to do things contrary to the law, as knowing that it would end in his destruction.

14. Here the apostle enters upon a kind of proof that sin may be considered as something within a man distinct from himself, and one by whom he is held in subjection; his own real inclination and good purposes being often controlled by the dictates of sin.

25. The

25 The Vulgate has *the favour, or grace of God*, instead of *I gave thanks to God*. W.

THE PARAPHRASE.

In order to satisfy you that christians in consequence of being dead to sin are intirely free from all obligation to its commands, and should therefore live a life of holiness and virtue, I appeal to all of you who have any knowledge of the nature of the law, which you know hath no claims upon any but the living. A married woman for example is bound to her husband, and is not at liberty to leave him as long as he lives, but when he dies she is free from all the obligations which she brought herself under by her marriage, so that she may then marry another person without being considered as an adulteress, tho' she would have been so denominated if she had done it while her husband was living. In like manner my brethren, we christians may be considered as dead to the law of sin, of which the death of Christ, and our baptism which resembles it, was an emblem. We, therefore, who were before married to sin, are now at liberty to be contracted to God, who raised up Christ from the dead. We are now subject to him, and should bring forth the fruits of obedience which he requires of us.

Before this spiritual or emblematical death, the power of sin, to which we were, as it were, married, continually working in us, and inciting us to do what was contrary to the law, necessarily made us subject to death. But this body or principle of sin within us be-

ing now dead, we are delivered from it, and consequently from all fear of the law. We are now engaged in a new service and a spiritual one, the old contract being annulled.

You may say that in this I represent sin and the law as in the same league and interest. But this is so far from being the case, that it is the law that discovers sin, and shows the odious and destructive nature of it. For how could I know what was morally wrong, inordinate desire for instance, if the law had not expressly forbidden it. But sin, in order to destroy me, took advantage of the law, producing in me those inordinate desires which exposed me to its condemnation. For without the aid of the law sin could do nothing against me. Had there been no law I might have indulged my desires without controul. But the law being published, and finding sin within me, I became subject to death. So that the law, which was intended for my good, was in effect the cause of evil and destruction to me. For sin taking advantage of the law, seduced me into evil, and then by means of that law occasioned my death, and this notwithstanding the law, in itself considered, be most excellent, and leads to virtue and happiness.

Was then that which is in itself good, the necessary cause of death to me? By no means; but this body of sin within me, acting agreeable to its nature, made use of that which was good to my ruin, the law aggravating all my offences. For the law is spiritual and excellent, but I am carnal, in subjection to sin as a master.

To

To represent more distinctly the case of a man in this condition, in whom sin reigns as a master and tyrant, counteracting his own better inclinations, I shall suppose myself to be the person. In this case of subjection to sin, I often do what I know to be wrong, and what is even contrary to what I wish to do, or at least to have done, which proves that I acknowledge the excellence of the law against which I offend. It may, therefore, be said that it is not I myself, but this body of sin within me that transgresses the law, preventing the execution of any good purposes that I may form. Since I often do what I dislike, it cannot be said to be myself that does it, but this tyrant, sin, within me. I may even wish and intend to do good, but by this means be prevented. I may inwardly delight in the law of God, and yet be a slave to another master who carries me whither he pleases.

How miserable is this situation. Who shall deliver me from this tyrant sin? It is the gospel of Christ that does this, and for it I am thankful to the goodness of God. It is plain, however, that while I was in a state of subjection to sin, my mind, my inward approbation was in favour of the law of God, tho' I was still governed by sinful inclinations; so that there is something within me that must die, and which can only be effectually destroyed by the gospel.

Ch. VIII. The apostle still pursues his argument to shew that christians are no longer under obligation to sin as a master, and therefore not liable to condemnation; because the principles of christianity counteract the influence of sinful affections, and by making us to resemble

resemble God, give us the privilege of the children of God, and make us heirs to a happy immortality, all the consequences of the sin of Adam being done away by Christ.

1. You will remember that the apostle supposes, by way of allegory, that there is within every man a principle of evil, or body of sin, to which he sometimes gives the appellation of flesh. He also supposes that upon our embracing christianity another principle is introduced, which destroys the former, and thereby cancels all obligation and penalty to which we were subject on account of it. This principle being opposed to the former, or the flesh, the apostle calls the spirit; and because it comes from God, he sometimes calls it the spirit of God, not meaning however the holy spirit properly so called, or that power by which the first christians were enabled to work miracles.

2.*Here again the law of the spirit and the law of the flesh, mean nothing more than the spirit or the flesh, each of these principles having their respective laws or rules, by which those who are influenced by them are governed.

3. This is an irregular and imperfect sentence, but the meaning is, that as the law could not acquit us on account of sin that was within us, God sent his son, a man like one of us, on account of this sin, and in order to put an end to it, that the principle of sin that was within us might be destroyed by his gospel.

4. So that now, tho' not before, we are able to live according to the law, and therefore to be free from condemnation.

8. All this is intended to illustrate the different tendencies of the good or evil principle, called by the apostle the flesh and the spirit.

10. i. e. Tho' we be christians, we are subject to death on account of the transgression of Adam, but shall be raised to immortal life by the second coming of Christ.

Mr. W. renders this, *because of the acquittal*, supposing *righteousness* to be synonymous to *mercy*, in this and many other places.

17. It is most evident from this that the apostle considered Christ as being of the same nature with his followers, only that he is the elder brother, intitled to some peculiar privileges and favour, which was the case with the eldest son in the Jewish constitution. We also are called sons of God, and in pursuance of the same figure are likewise called heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; there being no privilege whatever that he enjoys, of which his followers, at least some of them, will not partake.

21. Here, by a fine figure of speech, the apostle represents the whole rational creation lamenting their condition, being subject to mortality through Adam, and heartily wishing for that redemption from the power of death which was to be effected for them by Christ.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Christians therefore who live according to the principles of their religion, and not according to those sinful dispositions which were in them before, are not subject
to

to condemnation. For the vivifying principle of the gospel delivers them from the deadening principle or power of the law. Since the law could not save us on account of the evil principle that was within us, God was pleased, on account of sin that was in the world, and in order to put an end to its power, to send his son, who, tho' he had no other external appearance than that of other men who are liable to sin themselves, destroyed that body of sin, that we christians walking, not according to the evil carnal principle that before governed us, but according to the spirit of his gospel, may be able to fulfil the law, and thereby be delivered from its condemning power. For they who are influenced by the evil principle do evil things, and they who are under the influence of the good principle do good things; and it is the evil principle and evil actions that lead to death, whereas the good principle and good actions lead to life. For this evil principle in men is always at enmity with the law of God, so that they who are governed by it, cannot please God. But ye are not under the influence of this evil principle, but of the good one, if that good principle from God by Christ be in you, and if you have not this principle, you are in fact no christians.

If you be true christians your bodies are still subject to death on account of the sin of Adam, by which death came into the world, but christianity will be the means of your rising to a new and a better life, because of the righteousness of Christ, by means of which the effects of the sin of Adam are reversed. For if the same spirit
and

and power of God be in you that was in Christ, it will raise you to immortal life as it did him.

It follows from these considerations, that we christians are under no obligation to live in obedience to sin or the flesh. If we do this, we are subject to death and condemnation, but if by the gospel we subdue our carnal appetites and passions we shall live. They may be said to be the sons of God, who have his spirit within them, and in consequence of this we are no longer slaves, subject to fear, but the proper sons of God, and can with confidence call him our father. The spirit that is within us bears witness that we are the children of God, it being the spirit of God; and if we be the children of God, we have of course the right of heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, and, therefore, if we suffer with him here, we shall be glorified together with him hereafter; and certainly all the sufferings of the present life, are not to be compared with the glory to which we shall then be raised.

To this great event respecting the sons of God, the whole rational creation, being subject to death through sin, may be said to look with the most eager expectation. For mankind in general became subject to death, not on their own account, but through Adam, whose sin brought death into the world. But notwithstanding this they may be said to live in the hope of a deliverance from death, and to recover the privilege of the sons of God, the same that Adam enjoyed before his fall.

22. The apostle proceeds to represent all nature as groaning under the effects of sin, and longing for their deliverance from it by the gospel; but he speaks of this deliver-

deliverance as not completed till the general resurrection. He then exults in the great blessings of christianity, as a proof of the love of God to man, observing, that christians being secure of the divine favour have nothing to fear, and that it is not in the power of the world, or any thing in it, to make them abandon their interest in his favour.

23. Even christians have not yet obtained that deliverance from the effects of sin which the gospel has provided, but must wait for it till the general resurrection.

24. i. e. The christian salvation is not a thing that is enjoyed at present, but something to be hoped for ; agreeably to what he elsewhere says, *we live by faith and not by sight.*

27. By *spirit* in this place is not to be understood the holy spirit, properly so called, or the power of working miracles, but that principle of a new life which the apostle supposes to be introduced by the gospel, in opposition to the flesh, or the principle of evil by means of which men are subject to death and liable to condemnation. The workings of this spirit, or new principle, tho' we cannot always express them in words, the apostle says that God knows and approves ; so that it may be considered as something within us, as distinct from ourselves as the evil principle above mentioned, and that pleads with God for us.

28. This may be rendered *It, viz. the spirit worketh all things for good. W.*

29. It is impossible not to see that in this passage the apostle considered Christ as a man like ourselves, our brother, being of the same nature. Had he been considered

ed as our maker in any sense, he could never have been called our brother too. The disparity is too great for any such comparison. Had he been our maker, he might have been called our Father, as God himself is, but he could never have been called our brother. As to the two natures of Christ, by which some endeavour to explain this circumstance, the scriptures say nothing about any such thing. In the plain language of those books man is called man, and God, God. The idea of a being compounded of God and man, is altogether a creature of men's imaginations; and a monstrous idea it is. We read of no beings between God and man besides angels, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews evidently considers Christ as a being distinct from them.

30. Here the apostle represents the final result of that favour by which God distinguishes those who are called to the profession of the gospel, the object of which was to make men like his son Christ Jesus, and to give them glory together with him.

33. By a change in the pointing we may give this sentence a more spirited and rhetorical turn, such as this apostle frequently affects. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Do you say it is God? That cannot be, he justifies them. *Who is it that condemneth?* Is it Christ? No, for he died, or rather is risen again, and is now interceding for us, &c.

34. This is all figurative language, and must not be interpreted literally. Christ being *at the right hand of God*, which is only a figure of speech, for God is equally present every where, and is at no time in one place
more

more than another, only intimates that he is in a state of high favour with God, and may therefore be considered as befriending his followers, and doing them kind offices with God; as those persons who have intimate access to earthly princes, have an opportunity of acting the parts of advocates or intercessors for their friends with them. But that Christ literally intercedes with God on the behalf of christians, is by no means to be inferred from such figurative language as this. Indeed he himself asserts the very contrary. For speaking of his absence from his disciples he says, as we render it. *I say not that I will pray the father for you, for the father himself loveth you &c.* but it ought to have been rendered, I say I shall not pray the father for you, intimating that there would be no occasion for it, since the father would love them as he had done him, and they would have the same intimate access to him. It was from considering Christ as a literal intercessor, that christians began to pray to him. Afterwards they considered the virgin Mary and other persons, to whom they gave the appellation of saints, as intercessors with God for men, but in due time they made them the proper objects of prayer, without any regard to their interceding with God for them.

39 Here the apostle makes an enumeration, sometimes in plain language and sometimes in figures, of every thing that can be supposed to have influence on the minds of men, and he shews that none of them can have any power to move true christians from the faith and hope of the gospel.

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THE PARAPHRASE:

It is evident that the whole creation is, as it were, in pain, longing for a deliverance, even to this very day. Nay, we ourselves who are converts to christianity, have not yet obtained our complete deliverance, but are looking for it at the resurrection. For the christian salvation does not consist in any thing that we have already attained, but in something that we still hope for, and this hope gives us exercise for patience, the thing we expect not being in our possession. And even the new and inward man of which I have been speaking, the introduction of which destroys the old man, or the body of sin within us, this spirit of christianity may be said to assist us in this our state of trial and patience; our inward groanings, which cannot always be expressed in words, being a kind of silent intercession for us, since God who knows all things is acquainted with the nature and tendency of these silent aspirations; so that this spirit may be said to be our advocate with God, as the evil principle that was formerly within us, was our real enemy, deceiving us and conducting us to our destruction.

Not only his inward spirit, but every thing in the whole course of divine providence, must tend to the ultimate benefit of those who love God, and whom it has been his good pleasure to call to the knowledge of the gospel. Those who are the objects of his special favour and regard, it was his original purpose to bring to a conformity to his son Christ Jesus, that he might be considered as the first born, having many brethren like himself. And, to trace the progress of the gracious

designs of God in the gospel, those whom he designed to bring to this conformity, to the image of his son, in believing and obeying his gospel, he first, in the course of his providence, calls to the knowledge of it. This gospel, received and obeyed by them, effects their deliverance from sin, and consequently their justification in the sight of God, and this prepares them for future glory.

What then are we authorized to infer from this view of things? Does it not appear that God is for us, and if so what can prevail against us. He who has shewn so much love for us, as to have given his beloved son to death on our account, will hardly withhold from us any other blessing. Who then is it that is to lodge an accusation against those that are distinguished as the favourites of heaven? Is it God? But it is God himself, as I have shewn, who justifies or acquits us. Who, I say, can be supposed to pass sentence of condemnation upon us? Is it Christ? Certainly not, for he is so far from being ill disposed towards us, that out of the love he had for us, he even gave up his life. And if we rejoice in the consideration of his death, much more may we in the consideration of his resurrection, and of his advancement to the right hand of God, where he may be considered as our advocate, instead of one who accuses or condemns us.

Thus favoured by Christ, shall any thing destroy or weaken our love and attachment to him? Surely not any of the troubles or persecutions to which we can be called here below, even tho' that scripture should be fulfilled in us, which says, *for thy sake we are continually*

ally exposed to death, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, all these things give occasion to our greatest triumph, the principles of the gospel enabling us to endure them. For it is not, I am confident, in the power of any thing in the whole compass of nature, not all the powers in the world, nothing that we now feel, or shall ever be exposed to, either prosperity or adversity, to lessen our attachment to the gospel, or, consequently, diminish the love of God towards us.

Ch. IX. The apostle, seemingly apprehensive that what he had said concerning the law might give offence to the Jewish christians, and even more offence than he could wish to the unbelieving Jews, here expresses his earnest wishes and prayers in their behalf, and speaks of the great privileges and advantages which they enjoyed.

He particularly shows that notwithstanding the abuse of these privileges, the promises of God to the seed of Abraham were fulfilled, tho' not in his natural seed, yet in his spiritual seed, or those who imitated his faith by becoming christians. He also shews that with respect to every privilege of this kind, the divine being acts from reasons only known to himself, and that his conduct is not to be arraigned by short sighted men, and, therefore, that the Jews have no more right to complain of the divine dispensations, in admitting the Gentiles to the privileges of the posterity of Abraham, than the rest of the world had to complain of his distinguishing them as his natural descendants.

1. This is in fact equivalent to an oath or solemn asseveration, the apostle appealing to his conscience and

to God, the holy spirit being nothing else but the power of God; and he might chuse to make use of this phraseology rather than of the term God, as it was by the gift of the spirit, that the gospel, such as it was preached without regard to the law, was confirmed.

3. This Mr. W. renders, *I profess myself to be. W.*

The meaning is, not that he was willing to suffer as one who would be rejected by Christ at the last day, but rather, as the words will very well bear, that he might be anathema, or devoted to destruction in this world, as Christ himself had been, i. e. he was willing to expose himself to any risques or suffering for the sake of his countrymen.

4. *Adoption* means being the children or people of God in a peculiar sense, he being their God in a sense in which he was not the God of other nations. The glory which the apostle here mentions, means the peculiarly glorious presence of God, the symbol of which was a luminous cloud called a glory, which appeared upon the ark, and sometimes filled the tabernacle and the temple.

5. *Who is over all*, that is, as it is elsewhere expressed, *who is head over all things to his church, God blessed for ever*. This is an exact rendering of the passage, and it is no unusual thing with the apostle to break out in this manner into expressions of praise to God, upon the mention of particular instances of his grace and goodness. But with a little alteration it may be rendered, *whose is the God over all, blessed for ever*, in continuance of the phraseology in the preceding clause,
whose

whose are the Fathers, &c. and whose is God himself; he being their God, as I have observed, in a peculiar sense.

Mr W. supposes that the term *God* in this place is used in a lower sense, viz. *as God over all*, having great power delegated to him, as to *Moses* with respect to Pharaoh.

6. Here the apostle, in order to prove that the promise of God had really taken effect, proceeds to shew that his promise did not extend to all the posterity of Jacob, any more than it did to all the posterity of Abraham, or of Isaac, tho' the promise was made to their seed, or posterity, in general. His object is to shew that christians being imitators of the faith of Abraham, and, therefore, his spiritual children, are intitled to the blessings promised to his seed. But this allegorical method of interpreting scripture, tho' the Jews were always fond of it, is both unsafe, and in this case unnecessary, since christians are blessed by means of the seed of Abraham or Christ, tho' not as the seed of Abraham themselves. And certainly if we consult the promise itself, in the book of Genesis, we must be convinced that it was intended for the natural posterity of Abraham only. Abraham himself could not infer any thing else from it.

13. Thus the apostle shews that it was not to all the posterity of Abraham, or of Isaac, that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant were to descend. But he forbears to draw his general inference in this place as he does elsewhere, and especially in the epistle to the Galatians, viz. that the blessings of this covenant did not descend to all the posterity even of Jacob, but only to the christians.

14. Here the apostle enters upon a vindication of the dispensations of providence on a more general principle, for which he finds authorities in the books of scripture.

16. The declaration of the divine being here referred to, is in Exod. xxxiii, 19. after the sin of the Israelites respecting the golden calf, when God declares his purpose to shew his sovereign mercy as he himself should think proper. In the terms *willing* and *running*, the apostle probably alludes to Abraham's willing, or wishing that Ishmael might be his heir, whom, however, God rejected, and to Esau's running to get the venison which his father had desired, before he gave him his blessing, when it was reserved for Jacob.

17. The apostle here extends his argument, to shew from the scriptures that God acts in a more sovereign manner, and upon principles less discoverable by us, in determining the fate of men and nations, and the causes that lead to them, Pharaoh himself, and the part that he acted, being made use of to answer the wise purposes of providence. Not that his bad disposition is in any particular manner to be ascribed to God, any farther than all other things that come to pass according to the general plan of providence, from all which God will bring good.

19. This is an objection to the dispensations of providence, similar to that to which the apostle had been replying before viz the mercy of God in the gospel being an encouragement to sin. But he shews that God is accountable to no one for the privileges which he bestows upon some and withholds from others. For that
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the apostle is only speaking of privileges is evident from the conclusion of his argument in v. 24.

24. This shews that it was God's favour to the Gentiles in making them the heirs of his promises together with the Jews, that the apostle referred to in the whole of the preceding argument; tho' the consequence of improving them was final happiness, and the unavoidable consequence of not improving them was final destruction. Even with respect to those that perish, on whom the apostle said that God was willing to shew his wrath or display his justice, the apostle likewise says, that he endured with much long suffering; which shews that they had likewise had sufficient means of reformation and improvement, and that there was no want of any good disposition towards them on the part of God.

25. Here the apostle begins to shew, that there are passages in the Old Testament which intimate that all the Israelites were not to be heirs to the promises of God, but only some of them, and those not the majority, from which he would infer that it was in the councils of God, that only a few of the Jews should believe the gospel, and the rest be rejected. This was no doubt in the councils of God, and for the wisest reasons, as I have frequently endeavoured to shew; but that this may be inferred from the passages which the apostle here adduces, tho' seemingly for that purpose, is not so clear.

26. The passage in Hosea Ch. i, 10, refers to the few who should return from the Babylonish captivity. Their being said not to be the people of God, was probably by the heathens, who said that God had cast them

off. But the prophet says that notwithstanding this God would appear in their favour.

29. The passages from Isaiah have the same meaning with those from Hosea, intimating, that after that great calamity of the Jewish nation, a few only would return to inherit the land of Canaan.

33. To vindicate the dispensations of providence in putting the Gentile christians in the place of Jews, the apostle says, that it was the fault of the Jews that occasioned it. They were not the imitators of the faith of Abraham, as the Gentile christians were. The stone referred to by the prophet Isa. xxviii, 16. was a corner stone of a great building, which God was to lay in Zion; intimating that tho' Ephraim, or the kingdom of the ten tribes, would be finally destroyed, it would not be so with Judah, but that God would rebuild them, restoring them to their own country in their latter days. But Paul, in his allegorical method of interpreting scripture, seems to call this stone, Christ, a stone at which the unbelieving Jews stumbled, they not receiving his gospel. The *stone of stumbling* mentioned Isa. viii, 14. is God himself, who says that he will be a rock and refuge to those which should put their trust in him, but a stone of stumbling to those who should not. Speaking of the invasion of the country by the Assyrians and Israelites, the prophet says, *sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread*, not the Assyrians or the Israelites. *And he shall be for a sanctuary*, i. e. to those who put their trust in him; *but a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both* the

the houses of Israel &c. that is, to his enemies, and the enemies of his people.

Ch. X. The apostle, still having a view to the Jews who complained of the preaching of the gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles, endeavours to vindicate the conduct of providence with respect to them, by pointing out intimations of it in the books of the Old Testament. But as the Jews in general were fond of applying the scriptures to particular purposes for which they were not originally intended, but to which they might be accommodated, the apostle continues to make the same use of them. We are not to be surprized, therefore, if upon an attentive view of the passages, we should not think them to be all equally to his purpose: We have the scriptures before us, and ought to use the reason that God has given us in judging of their meaning, and the propriety of their application by the apostles, as well as others.

3. The Jews made so great a boast of their law, that at this time they seem to have imagined that the favour of God was annexed to the mere observance of its ritual. On no other supposition can the apostle's charge in this and other places be vindicated. For the real maxims of the Old Testament, by which every Jew professed to abide, were the same with those of the New; the favour of God being there annexed to the observance of moral precepts only, and the mercy of God being always represented as extended to the penitent. Of this it is needless to quote examples. This the apostle himself seems to assert in the next verse.

4. Meaning perhaps, that the christian mode of justification

nification is the same that is really taught in the law, tho' the Jews had overlooked it.

5. It does not appear that Moses had any view in the passage here quoted from him, to the two methods of justification, one by works, and the other by grace; but the apostle supposed that his language might be interpreted so as to be descriptive of them.

7. Mr. W. translates, or rather paraphrases, *For that is the same thing as to set aside the resurrection of Christ from the dead.*

9. The intention of Moses in the passage here quoted was to shew how condescending God had been to them in making their law so plain, that without any tedious inquiry they might acquaint themselves with it. But as mention is made of going up to heaven, coming down from heaven, and descending into the deep, the apostle accommodates these expressions to Christ, who in a figurative sense came down from heaven, who descended into the grave, and who rose from the dead.

11. Here the apostle seems to be proving from the Old Testament, that the divine favour was not to be confined to the Jews, but to be extended to all who believe in God, or messengers from God.

15. This is a vindication of the apostle's preaching to the Gentiles. They were designed, he says, to be brought to believe, but they could not believe without a preacher regularly commissioned for that purpose.

16. i. e. The Israelites.

19. The design of Moses was to describe the low state to which the Jews would be reduced in consequence

quence of their disobedience, so as to be oppressed and insulted by the meanest nations, but the apostle applies all this to the provocations the Jews would receive from the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, whom they held in the greatest contempt.

20. In the passage here alluded to viz. Isaiah lxxv, 1, &c, it is probable that the prophet only meant the Israelites, whom he was describing as having apostatized to idolatry. The meaning of the two first verses seems to be expressed in the third; but the apostle applies the former to the case of the Gentiles, and the latter only to that of the Jews.

THE PARAPHRASE.

What I have said concerning rejection of the majority of the Jews, on account of their not embracing the gospel, by no means arises from any ill will that I bear them. On the contrary, it is my most earnest wish and prayer that they may obtain every blessing. For I must acknowledge, that notwithstanding their persecution of christians, they are actuated by a zeal for the glory of God, tho' it is a zeal not sufficiently directed by knowledge. It is either ignorance, or inattention to the maxims on which God has always received sinners into his favour, that has led them so strenuously to contend for another method of justification, which may be said to be their own, and not God's. For had they adhered to the true principles of their own religion, they would have embraced the gospel, the maxims of it being sufficiently indicated in their own sacred writings.

For

For Moses describes both the methods of justification, viz. that of which the Jews now boast, and also that which is professed by christians.

He speaks of a former method of justification when he says, Lev. xviii, 5. Deut. xxvii, 26, *the man that doth these things shall live in them.* For the Jews now expect the favour of God for their observance of the ceremonial law. But he has a view to the principles of the gospel when he says, Deut. 11—14, *Say not in thy heart who shall ascend into heaven; for what can this allude to, but bringing down Christ from above for the instruction and salvation of men; or who shall descend into the deep, evidently alluding to the resurrection of Christ from the dead; but as he proceeds, the word is, in thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart.* This is certainly the word of faith, or the gospel that we apostles preach, which makes salvation, or the favour of God to depend not upon men's observance of the ceremonial law of Moses, but upon their believing and obeying the gospel of Christ, and especially their full persuasion that God has confirmed his divine mission by raising him from the dead. For as Moses, in the passage I have quoted, speaks of the word being in the mouth and the heart, by the latter he means that inward conviction, with which a man gives his cordial assent to the gospel, and by the mouth that open profession of it to which every christian is obliged.

That the blessings of the covenant of God were not to be confined to the Jews, we learn from the prophet Isaiah, who says ch. xxviii. 16, *Whoever believes in him shall not be ashamed.* God, therefore, makes no difference

ence between Jews and Gentiles; for he who bears an equal relation to all his offspring, will distinguish by his favour all his sincere worshippers alike. The prophet Joel also speaks in the same general terms when he says, *whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, not confining this to the Israelites, shall be saved.*

But how can men become worshippers of God through Christ, or pray in the name of Christ, without believing in him? And how can they believe in a person of whom they have never heard, and how can they hear of Christ, if no person preach the gospel to them, and how can any person preach without a proper commission for the purpose? The Jews, therefore, have no reason to complain of my preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, since it appears to have been the original intention of God, that they should be called to the belief of it, to share its blessings. Let Jews and Gentiles then equally apply to this case the words of the prophet Isaiah, Ch. LII, 7. *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.*

That all the Jews would not receive the gospel is intimated by the prophet Isaiah when he says, Ch. LIII, 1, *who hath believed our report?* According to these testimonies, faith must come by hearing, which implies the preaching of the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles, and we rejoice that the Gentiles, in countries very remote from Judea have already had the gospel preached to them; so that we may apply to this case what David says concerning the heavenly bodies, Ps. xix, 11,

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Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

But had not the Jews themselves plain intimations of the calling of the Gentiles. Moses alludes to this when he said Deut. xxxii, 21, *I will provoke them to jealousy by them that were not a people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you.* But Isaiah more clearly alludes to it when he says Ch. Lxv, 1, 2 *I was found of them who sought me not, I was made manifest to them that enquired not after me*; whereas in the very next verse he says, with respect to Israel, *all the day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gain-saying people*, intimating by the former the favour intended for the Gentiles who had not known God, and by the latter the rejection of the Jews to whom he had offered his mercy in vain.

Ch. XI. The apostle with a view to conciliate the Jews, whom he might be apprehensive of offending by what he had said of the rejection of their nation, and the calling of the Gentiles, here observes, that the rejection of the Jews was only partial, and for the best of purposes, that the Gentiles therefore had no reason to insult them on that account, and that in due time God would certainly shew that favour to the posterity of Abraham which he had originally promised, and which was the subject of so many prophecies; for that the time would come when the great body of the Jewish nation would be converted to christianity; which would be attended with more beneficial effects to the Gentile world than their partial rejection of the gospel at this particular time.

1. The conversion of so many Jews to the belief of christianity, notwithstanding their peculiarly strong prejudices against such a Messiah as Jesus was, is an argument of the greatest value in favour of its truth. The Jews had certainly the best opportunity of examining the pretensions and miracles of Jesus; and the rulers of the country were most violently hostile to it, and most narrowly watched both him, and his apostles after him. The wonder is, not that these rulers, whose prejudices were invincible, did not believe in Christ, but that any Jew did, and yet many thousands of them, during the lives of the apostles, became converts to christianity.

2. To know and consequently to *foreknow*, if future time be concerned, is in the language of scripture, of the same import with to *choose* or to *favour*. Thus God says to the Israelites, *you have I known before all the families of the earth*; that is, you have I distinguished by special favour, and therefore notwithstanding appearances for a time, the original purpose of God on the behalf of the posterity of Abraham is sure to take effect:

5. i. e. God makes choice of few of the Israelites to be converted to christianity.

6. As it was by grace or the especial favour of God, that this took place, their acceptance with God could not be said to be on account of their observance of the law, for then it would have been a matter of right and a thing of course.

7. The body of the Jewish nation did not believe, but only a few, the rest being blinded or infatuated, not by any direct influence of God upon their minds, but in consequence of their own obstinacy, which, however,
answered

answered the best purposes in the general plan of things.

8. This infatuation of the Jews, and also that of Pharaoh, was, strictly speaking, from themselves, arising from their own perverseness; but there is a sense in which whatever comes to pass is ascribed to God, in the scriptures.

10. These were David's imprecations, or at most prophecies concerning his particular enemies, and the apostle seems to consider the enemies of the gospel among the Jews, as being in the same situation.

11. i. e. Had God no other object besides the rejection of the Jews, and will this rejection be final? By no means; since on their rejection of the gospel it has been preached with success to the Gentiles, which gives them so much offence. The manner in which the rejection of the gospel by the generality of the Jews in that age operates towards establishing the evidences of christianity is easily perceived. It clearly shews that christianity had no countenance from the civil powers in the country in which it originated; and the unbelief of the Jews, and their hatred to christianity, have continued so long, while with the most jealous scrupulosity they have had the custody of their own sacred books, that it will never be in the power of unbelievers to say that the christians have corrupted the scriptures, or had in any other manner been favoured by the Jews.

12. Here the apostle intimates that as the partial unbelief of the Jews was favourable to the evidences of christianity, their general conversion in a future period will be a still greater establishment of them. And, indeed

indeed, when the Jews shall be restored to their own country, and become that great and flourishing people which all the prophecies announce they shall be, and then become christians, which the apostle Paul, by the spirit of prophecy, declares will be the case, it will be such an argument of the truth of the divine predictions, as will hardly be in the power of any man to withstand.

14. viz. By representing the blessings of the gospel, and exciting in the Jews a desire to partake of them in common with the Gentiles.

16. In this the apostle seems to advance a kind of argument for the future conversion of the Jews, since those who are now converted might be considered as the first fruits, which always preceded the general harvest.

18. The gospel originated with the Jews, and it was the privilege of being the people of God, originally intended for the Jews, to which the Gentiles were admitted.

24. This is a beautiful allusion of the apostle, shewing the original pre-eminence of the Jews over the Gentiles, and giving the latter a proper idea of their obligation to the Jews, as the ancient people of God, and a prospect of their future restoration to the divine favour.

25. Here the apostle speaks as a prophet, who had been favoured with some revelation concerning the intentions of God respecting the future conversion of the Jews. He calls this a mystery, as if it had been something revealed to himself, and which he afterwards

made known to others. Such was the mystery that all should not die, but that all should be changed, of which he gives an account in the epistle to the Thessalonians. We therefore learn that the unbelief of the Jews is to continue, till a period characterized by *the fulness of the Gentiles being come in*, meaning probably, till christianity shall have been preached, with considerable effect, among all the nations of the known world. This is the same phrase that our Lord makes use of, when he speaks of the period in which *Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles*, Luke xxi, 24. It should seem, therefore, that the general conversion of the Jews will be nearly coincident with their return to their ancient country.

27. Isaiah, in the passage here referred to, speaks of the future glorious state of the Israelites, when there would be a general prevalence of virtue among them.

28. The partial unbelief of the Jews was for the sake of the Gentiles, but still the original purpose of God in favour of the posterity of Abraham must stand, and will hereafter have its full effect.

36. This is a just and animated exclamation on a general view of the wisdom of providence with respect to the propagation of the gospel. Those events which we think unfavourable at present, will hereafter appear to be most essential to its final establishment. Had those circumstances respecting the reception of the gospel by the Jews in general, and by the learned and powerful among the Greeks and Romans, which unbelievers at present believe to be necessary to its credibility, really taken place, christianity would now have wanted

wanted the most important argument of its truth, and in times still more distant, a scheme so favoured, as they require this to have been, by the civil powers of the age and country in which it originated, would be said not even to deserve examination. At present the evidence is such as must appear abundantly satisfactory to those who carefully consider the particulars of it, and they are growing continually stronger, so that we cannot doubt but as the fulfilment of prophecy will become more apparent, it will overpower all remaining incredulity.

Ch. XII. The apostle having fully answered the objection to christianity, as countenancing licentiousness, gives some excellent moral precepts, and urges the observance of them with peculiar force.

1. The apostle wrote this epistle from Corinth, where we have seen that the christians did not immediately on their conversion think there was any occasion to discontinue that life of sensuality to which they had been addicted, and especially fornication, which had even been countenanced in their former religion. The apostle, knowing this to be the disposition of the Gentile world in general, here exhorts the Romans to purity in this respect, considering themselves as persons peculiarly devoted to God, using the emblem of living sacrifices, and, according to the Jewish law, all sacrifices were to be animals without blemish.

2. Here the apostle alludes to those corrupt practices to which the heathens were addicted, but which christians ought to hold in abhorrence.

3. In this the apostle alludes to that high conceit of themselves, for which the church of Corinth were remarkable, and there might be persons with the same conceit of themselves at Rome and elsewhere.

5. This is a beautiful and just emblem, and what we ought frequently to impress our minds with, as a motive both to humility and also to brotherly love. The most distinguished among us are still members of the same body with the meanest, and therefore ought to feel for, and be useful to one another.

6. Here the apostle considers every qualification, that can distinguish one man from another, as equally the gift of God, to be improved for the purposes for which they were given, and not to minister to pride and conceit.

Prophecy, as I have frequently observed, often signifies exhortation, and, indeed, nothing that the apostle says in the course of this epistle implies, that the christians at Rome had as yet received any miraculous gift of the spirit, nor does it appear that any apostle had been there to impart them, and it was by the imposition of their hands that those gifts were ordinarily communicated. In this manner it pleased God to distinguish the twelve apostles.

11. We ought to be zealous in works of piety and virtue; but still to observe the proper times for them.

The disposition to idleness, under pretence of religion; appears to have been very general in several places about this time. This the apostle here, and elsewhere, strongly reprobates, and he himself even worked with his own hands rather than be burdensome to any one.

13. The duty of hospitality, or receiving necessitous strangers, was of more importance, and consequently more a virtue in former times than in ours. Fewer journies were then undertaken, and there was less accommodation for travellers.

17. The word that we render *honest*, should have been rendered *reputable* or *honourable*.

20. This is not said to encourage a spirit of revenge, the very reverse of which is here inculcated, but only an insinuation that if a man's views were to humble and punish his enemies, he should leave it to God, who, if he thinks proper, can do it in the most effectual manner.

In the mean time it is our duty to render our enemies every kind and friendly office.

21. This is a very happy expression. By calling doing evil, a *being overcome of evil*, implies a weakness of mind in giving way to it, and that doing good is a conquest over evil principles; so that there is great heroism and magnanimity in virtue, and as great weakness and meanness in vice.

Ch. XIII. The apostle continues to urge some useful moral precepts which shews the excellent moral tendency of the gospel, in opposition to those who thought that the principles of it were favourable to licentiousness.

4. The Jews of that age were, as I have often observed, of a very refractory disposition, exceedingly averse to the Roman yoke, and pleading conscience in refusing to pay tribute, or shewing any other mark of submission; considering themselves as the subjects of

God alone, and that all other authority over them was mere usurpation, and such as ought to be opposed. This spirit would be too apt to spread itself among the Gentile converts, and might bring the christians in general into inconvenience, especially a , at first, christianity was considered as nothing more than a sect in judaism, and it was of the greatest consequence to the success of the christian cause not to exasperate the Roman government unnecessarily. Besides, at that time, however unjust or despotic the Roman government under Nero might be, it would have been madness to attempt a rebellion. The apostle, therefore, without entering into any question about the nature of government, or in what cases it was lawful, or in what unlawful, considered it as the duty of christians to submit to that government which they found established, and which all their efforts would not have been able to overturn. He represents the government they were under, as that to which the providence of God had thought fit to subject them, and in which they ought to acquiesce as such. These maxims, therefore, are to be considered as applying to the particular circumstances of the times in which the apostle wrote, and it is absurd to plead them in favour of a government manifestly unjust and tyrannical, from which it is in the power of the people to relieve themselves. Upon any other maxim, christians ought to be universally passive, and bear every wrong and insult, without using the means which God has given them to obtain redress.

Besides, what the apostle says, if interpreted literally, relates only to such governments as are civil and benevolent.

beneficial, a terror to evil doers, and not to the good. In all matters of a civil nature, christians, like other men, must act according to the reason that God has given them, and consult their own interest, according to the particular circumstances in which they may find themselves.

5. i. e. Not for fear of any civil punishment, but out of conscience towards God.

6. Here the apostle, having a view, no doubt, to the case of a just and good government, represents the officers of it as the ministers of God, and acting under him in the lawful discharge of their duty.

8. i. e. Completely discharge and have done with every obligation that you lie under, except that of brotherly love, the obligation to which can never be discharged, but must always remain incumbent upon us. This is a fine thought, and this love, which we ought to keep in continual exercise, is that great principle which will lead to the observance of every relative and moral duty.

9. For, if we consult the good of our fellow creatures, we shall find that we act towards them as these precepts require.

12. Here the apostle seems to consider the state of Gentilism as a state of darkness, or of night, and the knowledge which was peculiar to christianity as the light of day, tho' it cannot as yet be said to be completely day, but that some remains of night will continue till the second coming of Christ; when, and not before, the gospel salvation will be properly completed. The apostle, therefore, considers those who have been

christians some time, as nearer to this glorious day than they had been before. However, he exhorts all christians, as those who enjoy, at least a partial day-light, to behave as those who may be said to be of the day, and, who have the eyes of the world upon them.

13. i. e. Not in the unlawful commerce of the sexes; or in those indecencies which lead to it.

14. i. e. Act as those who have assumed the character of Christ, pretending to appear as he did; or act in a manner becoming your profession as christians.

Ch. XIV. The apostle still proceeds in his instructions with respect to the conduct of christians, and after having enforced the duties of obedience to government, of universal love and good will, and of a conversation becoming the gospel in general, he now gives some directions respecting the difference of opinion and conduct, among the christians of that age, on the subject of the lawfulness of eating certain meats. A difference of a similar nature had occurred at Corinth with respect to meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols, and which was afterwards sold in open market; Of such meat as this the apostle said a christian might lawfully eat, unless his doing so should give offence to a fellow christian more scrupulous than himself.

What it is that the apostle refers to in the case before us is not so clear, but upon the whole it seems most probable that he had in his view the peculiar scrupulosity of some Jews, who, when they were in foreign countries, would eat nothing but vegetables, lest there should be some unknown pollution in the animal food they met with. This extreme scrupulosity, some of the

the Jewish christians who retained their former attachment to their ancient law might adopt, while others of their brethren might be less scrupulous, and perhaps treat their prejudices with ridicule.

That the Jewish christians were ever absolved from their obligation to their observance of the law of Moses, does not by any means appear. It was a law solemnly instituted, and always declared to be perpetual, and we have no account of our Saviour, or the apostles, ever asserting its abrogation, or setting an example of disregard to it in their own conduct; tho' it was decreed by the apostles that the Gentile converts should not be bound by it, except in the circumstance of not eating blood, without a regard of which it would have been difficult for the Jewish and Gentile christians to have had any friendly intercourse.

1. *Weakness*, in this and many other places, means scrupulosity, a subjection to unreasonable prejudices. *Not to receive to doubtful disputations* means, do not tease him with controversy about things in doubt among you; things that were not of consequence to their common christianity.

2. This weakness is so expressly confined to the eating of herbs or vegetables, that it cannot with any reason be extended to the observance of the Mosaic law respecting all meats.

4. That we are here taught is a very important lesson, applicable to a variety of occasions, viz. that God accepts all who are sincere and conscientious, and that no man should censure and condemn any such. Such a weak brother may be condemned and censured by men, but

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but he will be acquitted and received by his proper master, which seems to be what the apostle means by his being *made to stand*, agreeable to the language of the Psalmist, *the wicked shall not stand in the judgment*; i. e. he shall be condemned.

5. What this observance of days means is not very evident, but it may relate to differences among the Gentile converts, as the former did to those among the Jews. Some Gentile converts, for example, might have a greater respect for the Jewish sabbath, than others. Indeed this we know to have been the case with many of the Gentile christians, and it continues to be so to this day. *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*, is a strong and remarkable expression, implying that every man has a full right to use his own judgment uncontrolled by others.

6. i. e. Every true christian must be supposed to be conscientious in every thing that he does, and whatever that leads to, should be respected by his brethren.

8. All christians are the subjects of Christ in life and in death. Nothing can absolve us from our allegiance to him, and therefore men should not take upon themselves to be masters with respect to each other.

12. The judgment-seat of Christ, and that of God are the same, not because Christ is God, but because he acts in the name, and by the authority of God, which is fully expressed when it is said that God will judge all the world by Jesus Christ; so that being judged by Christ and by God is in effect the same thing.

14. Mr.

14. Mr. W. renders, *I am satisfied that under the Lord Jesus, i. e. according to his gospel, no meat is in itself unholly.*

This can only refer to the particular difference mentioned before, and is not to be understood too generally. For this one apostle would never presume by his simple authority, and without informing the christian world of his commission so to do, to alter what had been established by all the apostles at their solemn conference at Jerusalem; and they were so far from releasing any Jews from their obligation to observe the laws of Moses in every respect, that they imposed one of its observances upon the Gentiles. Strictly speaking, no doubt, nothing is unclean of itself, but notwithstanding this, God had been pleased to make some things to be so with respect to some particular persons.

16. i. e. Do not abuse your liberty and your freedom from unworthy prejudices, so far as to be yourselves liable to censure on that account, in shewing no tenderness for the prejudices of others.

17. This is an excellent general maxim, teaching us that the great value of the gospel consists in nothing external, but only in virtue, in a benevolent and peaceable disposition of mind, and joy in the hope of the gospel which was confirmed by the gifts of the spirit.

23. i. e. A man should not violate his own conscience tho' it be an erroneous one, and we should always forbear to act till we can do it with the full consent of our own minds.

Ch. XV. The apostle after continuing his exhortation on the subject of christians, who had different sentiments

timents about things of small consequence, bearing with each other, reverts to the general object of this and of many of his epistles, viz. the right of the Gentiles to partake of the blessings of the gospel; endeavouring to persuade the Jewish christians to bear with it, and even to rejoice in it.

1. By the *strong*, the apostle means those who were not subject to weak and unreasonable prejudices. Such persons are not to use their own full liberty if it tends to ensnare and injure others.

3. What the apostle here quotes is an expression of David, who represents himself as suffering in the cause of God, and feeling for the injuries done to true religion. His language is here adapted to express what Christ suffered for the good of others.

4. In this the apostle incidentally mentions the use which himself, and the Jews in general, made of the scriptures, in applying the language of them to their own particular occasions for the purpose of exhortation or encouragement. We should always bear in mind the original sense of any passage in the scriptures, and not reason from them as if they had a proper and designed reference, different from what appears from the nature of the case, to have been the true sense of the passages so quoted.

5. i. e. According to the example of Jesus Christ, loving one another as he loved us.

6. We see here that all our works and duties respect the one true God, that they are what we owe to him, and also that this one true God is the same that is usually called the Father, and the father of our Lord

Jesus

Jesus Christ, and by no means Jesus Christ himself. Little could this apostle have imagined that his writings could ever be thought to countenance any other doctrine. How would he have been astonished if he had been told that in time both his master and himself would become objects of worship to christians ; for the worship of dead men soon followed that of Christ.

7. i. e. With love and affection.

8. The ministry of Christ himself was confined to Jews, that being the nation which God originally promised to take under his immediate protection, and to honour with peculiar privileges, and on this account they are entitled to respect from all the world.

9. As in the last verse he reminds the Gentiles of the respect due to the Jews, he here admonishes the Jews that, according to their own scriptures, the Gentiles were to become worshippers of the true God as well as themselves ; and for this purpose he quotes several passages of the Old Testament:

21. None of the passages which the apostle here quotes are to be understood as signifying that the Gentiles, as such, and without circumcision, were to share in the privileges of the Jews, but they shew that the Jewish dispensation had respect, in some way or other, to all the world. It was not for their own sakes only that the Jews were so highly distinguished, but it was for the good of the whole, that some one nation, and God thought proper to make choice of this, should be made so conspicuous for the greatest purposes respecting all.

13. i. e. May you rejoice in the faith and hope of
that

that gospel which was confirmed by the gifts of the spirit.

15. i. e. Being favoured with the office of apostleship to the Gentiles.

16. The Gentile converts were sanctified or devoted to God by the Holy Spirit, which descended upon the apostles and others in the form of *fire*, as victims were consecrated to God by the fire of the altar.

18. Meaning that he would confine himself within his proper province, which was to preach chiefly to the Gentiles.

21. Here the apostle adopts the language of the prophet as suiting this particular case, but without the least appearance of his supposing that it had this reference originally.

24. It does not appear that this apostle ever was in Spain, notwithstanding his intention of going thither. After writing this epistle he went to Jerusalem, where he was confined two years, He was then sent a prisoner to Rome, and in this state he continued there two years more. Whither he went upon his release we are not informed, but it is probable into the East, and soon after this he was put to death at Rome, being then perhaps on a progress westward as far as Spain.

31. The apostle was fully apprized of the inveterate enmity which the unbelieving Jews at Jerusalem bore him, and even of his unpopularity with the believing Jews there, and at other places.

Ch. XVI. I have observed that the conclusions of most of Paul's epistles, tho' least valuable as to their direct use, are highly valuable indirectly, and as an evidence

dence for the truth of christianity ; so many particular persons and circumstances being mentioned as give them the most unsuspecting appearance of genuine epistles, and exclude all idea of forgery. Indeed, there are no epistles come down to us from ancient times that have such clear evidence of genuineness as these, and accordingly it does not appear that it was ever called in question:

If this case be considered, it will be found absolutely impossible to admit the genuineness of these epistles, i. e. their having been actually written by the apostle Paul while he was engaged in preaching the gospel, in the midst of business, and so much contention, when all his motions were watched by his enemies and false friends, without admitting the truth of the facts which he mentions in them as at that time known to all, especially the miraculous gift of the spirit, and such a reception of christianity in that early period while the facts were recent and open to every man's examination. And the truth of these imply the truth of christianity, that is, they necessarily leave us to conclude that they were facts admitted by those who were best qualified to examine their truth, and who had every motive for doing it with impartiality, that Christ preached the doctrines which are ascribed to him in the gospel history, that he wrought many miracles in proof of his divine mission, that he was publicly crucified, and that he actually rose from the dead ; these facts, with those that are necessarily implied in them, are all that we ought to understand by christianity.

1. *Cenchres* was a sea-port to the city of Corinth. This *Phœbe* is suppose to have been the person who carried this epistle of Paul to Rome. In the christian church there were offices filled by women, particularly widows. Their employment was of a secular nature, but owing probably to the scandal which in after times arose from it, it was discontinued.

2. We may perhaps infer from this circumstance that tho' this *Phœbe* is called a servant of the church, she was not in indigent circumstances. Indeed such a person cannot well be supposed to have had any business of her own that could carry her to Rome, and a woman would not have been sent as a public messenger. She was probably a person of considerable fortune, who chose to devote her time and her wealth to the service of christianity, as many in that age did.

3. This *Priscilla* and her husband *Aquila*, are said to have left Rome in consequence of an edict of *Claudius*, banishing all Jews from that city. Paul met them at Corinth. They were afterwards at *Ephesus*, and now in the reign of *Nero*, the edict of *Claudius* being no longer in force, were returned to Rome.

4. They are said to have been eminently useful to that eloquent person *Apollos*, whom they instructed in the gospel more fully than he had been before.

5. According to some MSS. it is, *upon you*, not *upon us*. W.

7. By *kinsmen*, the apostle perhaps may mean only Jews, all of whom he elsewhere calls kinsmen. Paul was frequently in prison, as appears in other parts of his epistle, tho' but little mention is made of this circumstance

cumstance in the book of Acts. We see here that the term *Christ* is used to express christianity, which is the case in other places; so that to be in *Christ* is the same thing as to be a convert to christianity.

10. *Aristobulus* was probably a person of rank, and not a convert himself, but one who had in his family those who were so.

11. *Narcissus* might be in the same situation with *Aristobulus*, having in his family those who were christians.

12. It does not follow that the mother of this *Rufus* was the proper mother of *Paul*, but the apostle might use this term to denote the affectionate, and as it were, motherly care which she had taken of him.

15. From the great number of persons to whom the apostle sends salutations at *Rome*, we see how well informed he was of the state of christians there, and of the characters of those who composed that infant church.

It is well observed by Protestants that among so many salutations of *Paul* to the christians at *Rome*, no mention is made of *Peter*, who, according to the Catholics, was then settled at *Rome*, and the proper bishop of the place, and from this it is reasonably inferred that he was not there at that time. Indeed, it is far from being probable, that he ever properly resided in that city, tho' according to tradition both he and *Paul* were afterwards at *Rome* together, and suffered martyrdom there.

16. This mode of salutation is said to have been derived from the custom of the Jews, and was given by the men apart, and the women apart, for in the syna-

gones the men and women always sit in separate places. Such also was probably the custom of the primitive christians, and it is observed in many places of christian worship at this day. This kiss of charity as it was called, we find by early writers, was given immediately before the administration of the Lord's supper, after the prayer which preceded it.

18. In this the apostle had probably a view to the Jewish teachers, such as had created him so much disturbance in other churches, and some of whom had embraced the Gnostic opinions. That the moral character of these persons was very indifferent, appears from other epistles of Paul, as well as from those of Peter, John and Jude. Their object was, in a great measure, popular applause and gain, and they also allowed themselves great sensual indulgence. At least this seems to have been the character of many of them. It could not be that of them all, for some of them affected great austerity, and indeed, without something of this kind, it is not easy to account for the popularity which they acquired, and especially with such persons as the apostle could expect to have any influence with.

20. By Satan in this place, most interpreters, I believe, suppose to be meant the Jews, who were the great adversaries of christians at that time, and that expressing himself in this manner, the apostle had a view to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the intire dispersion of the Jews, as this epistle was written within eight years of the breaking out of the Jewish war, which terminated in the intire destruction of Judea. But it is perhaps more probable that he here meant all evil in general

general, considering this world as a state of trial, and looking forward to a better state.

22 Tertius is the same with Silas, both names having the same signification, viz. *the third*, the one in Latin, and the other in Hebrew. The apostle uses the Latin term in writing to the Romans. It seems that Paul generally made use of an amanuensis, probably on account of his not being used to write the Greek character and perhaps also on account of his not being sufficiently skilled in the language.

23. It appears from this circumstance that there were many persons of note among the christians in those very early times, especially among the Gentiles.

26 By *mystery* is here to be understood the gracious, but for a long time the hidden, design of providence, in favour of the Gentile world, by the preaching of the gospel to them.

27. Here, as upon all other occasions, we see God distinguished from Christ. God is the author of all good, and especially of the gospel, containing the revelation of a future life, and Christ is the servant or minister of God in the publication of this gospel, and thus is the means of bringing glory to God. Accordingly the apostle always ascribes the glory to God through Christ, as the medium through whom he imparts his blessings to us.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE

E P H E S I A N S.

CHAP. I. After the apostle Paul had written the epistle to the Romans, he went by way of Macedonia and Ephesus to Jerusalem, where he arrived at Pentecost, A. D. 58. There, a tumult being raised, he was apprehended and imprisoned, and, under one pretence or other, he was kept in confinement till the year 60, when, in consequence of his appealing to the emperor, which was a privilege of every Roman citizen, he was sent with other prisoners to Rome. In his voyage thither he was shipwrecked on the Isle of Malta, but after wintering there, he arrived at Rome in the spring of the year 61.

It is remarkable that we have no account of Paul's writing any epistle from Jerusalem or Cæsarea, where he was confined two years; but from Rome, where he was a prisoner the same space of time, he wrote several, and the first of them was this to the Ephesians, the object of which seems to have been to establish those christians to whom he had preached several years, in the pure faith of the gospel, and to counteract the attempts of the Jewish teachers to bring them into bondage to the law of Moses. He might likewise have a view to other corruptions of the gospel, and particularly to Gnostic

Gnostic tenets, to which some of the Jewish teachers gave countenance, tho' there is no direct reference to them in this epistle.

With these views the apostle endeavours to impress the minds of the christians at Ephesus with a sense of the value of the gospel, and of the goodness of God in calling the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, to the privileges of it. There is a peculiar dignity and sublimity in this epistle, as well as the strongest marks of the most earnest affection to those to whom he writes, and the same has been observed of all the epistles which he wrote from Rome. He probably knew that he was near the close of his life, of a long and laborious warfare as it may be called, in the cause of christianity, of the great value of which he was fully sensible. He therefore writes with that energy, with which a man may be supposed to give his last admonitions, to those he loves, respecting their most important interests.

1. *Saints* means chosen people, those to whom God stands in a peculiar relation, and the apostle gives this title to christians, to repress the pride of the Jews, who would allow none to be thus holy, or this peculiar people besides themselves.

2. You see how the apostle constantly distinguishes God from Christ. Indeed there is no passage in the New Testament in which Christ is so much as called God, tho' in an inferior sense. Could the apostle have foreseen how strangely the christian doctrine would have been corrupted in this respect, he might have taken more effectual methods to prevent it. But considering that he had not, and without a particular revelation

could not have had, the least suspicion of any such thing, nothing could be better calculated to put against it than the manner in which he has uniformly expressed himself on this subject.

3. Here the Father is not only distinguished by the appellation of God, but he is called the God, as well as the Father, of Jesus Christ himself. According to the apostle, it was God who by means of Christ, has imparted to mankind the blessings of the gospel. Observe also, that the blessings of the gospel are here said to be of a spiritual nature, and to respect a future state.

4. As the Jews boasted that they were the chosen people of God from the time of Abraham, the apostle represents the christians as being the chosen people of God from the very foundation of the world. We here see how familiar it is with the sacred writers to speak of things being done before the world was, when it was only in the divine councils that they should be done; christians could not be chosen before they were christians. In like manner, Christ is said to have had glory with God before the world was, when the meaning is, that this glory was designed for him; as these honours were designed for all christians, before either Christ or christians had any existence.

6. That is, by means of Christ or christianity.

7. By receiving and obeying the gospel, which was confirmed by the death and resurrection of Christ, we receive the forgiveness of sins from the free mercy of God, who requires no atonement or satisfaction, besides sincere repentance. In using the phrase redemption through the blood of Christ, it is possible that the apostle might allude

allude to the sin offerings, under the law, but in that case, the death of the victim was never considered as having any efficacy with God. All sacrifices were considered in the simple light of offerings, or presents, and constituted the ceremonial of introduction to the presence of God, according to the established custom of Eastern countries. Atonement is often said to be made where no victim was killed.

8. i. e. He discovers great wisdom in the gospel dispensation.

10. What the apostle here calls the great *mystery* of the gospel, or that secret which was not revealed or discovered till the latter days, was the divine purpose of bringing the Gentiles into a near relation to himself, by the preaching of the gospel.

To the phrase, *things in heaven and things on earth*, it is possible that the apostle might not annex any definite ideas, intending only to express how very great and comprehensive the scheme of the gospel was. Or, he might allude to that saying of our Saviour, *all power is given to me in heaven and in earth*; by which we are to understand, that all things, even divine interpositions, if necessary, will be subservient to the spread of the gospel.

11. As the Jews, in consequence of being the chosen people of God, enjoyed the inheritance of the land of Canaan, in allusion to this, the apostle speaks of an inheritance appropriated to all christians, who were now become the people of God.

13. As by *we*, in the former verse, the apostle probably means the Jews, of whom he was one, and to

whom the gospel was first preached, so by *ye*, in this verse, he means the Gentile christians, who also had the seal of God upon them, as his peculiar people, in the gift of the holy spirit.

14. By *redemption of the purchased possession*, the apostle probably meant the final deliverance of all the people of God, or the christians, from sin and misery. This can only be completed at the resurrection; but till that time the gifts of the spirit might be considered as the earnest, or token of God's favour to them, being, as it were, a seal of the divine promise.

The apostle having spoken of the great design of God in calling the Gentiles to the knowledge of the gospel, and also of the gift of the spirit, as a token of their being the children of God, as well as the Jews, proceeds to express his desire of their more perfectly understanding the scheme of the gospel, of which, and also of Christ, as being at the head of the scheme, he here speaks in the most magnificent terms.

15. This must mean the increase of their faith, or the knowledge of the gospel in it's purity, for it was he himself who first preached the gospel at Ephesus, at least the first who could be said to have founded a christian church in that city. He expresses himself in the same manner with respect to the church in Corinth, tho' it is evident, from the book of Acts, that he was the first that preached christianity in that city.

17. Here it is evident, that all the illumination the apostle prayed for, was to come from God the Father, who is here called *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the same, no doubt, who was the author of his being, whom

whom he reverently worshipped, and whom he taught all his disciples to worship ; so far was he from teaching the worship of himself.

18. i. e. To what hope you are called.

i. e. The riches, or the value and the glory of that inheritance which is reserved for all his peculiar people, Gentiles as well as Jews.

19. The power, as well as the goodness of God, has been displayed in the gospel, especially in raising Christ from the dead, and giving him the power and pre-eminence to which he now is, or ever is to be, advanced.

22. The apostle must be supposed to speak with a view to the christian church, and, therefore, whatever power Christ is here said to be possessed of, respects that only, and consequently the last circumstance that is mentioned is the making Christ *the head over all things to his church*. Consequently, his being said to be above every thing in the future world, as well as in this, can only refer to the rank and power that he will continue to possess with respect to christians at his return to raise the dead and judge the world ; after which, we are told by the same apostle, that this power is to be resigned into the hands of that God who gave it to him, to answer a great, but a temporary purpose.

23. It is a fine figure by which Christ is here represented as the head, and his disciples the body, all being one and the same system, he only having pre-eminence in point of honour, distinction, and usefulness. A similar idea is expressed by Christ being called our elder brother,

brother, implying that he is one of the same species or family. Accordingly, when he is called an heir of God, his brethren are at the same time joint heirs with him. This doctrine is uniformly inculcated in the New Testament, and we ought to have our minds deeply impressed with it, and fully to understand its value, in opposition to that strange system, however prevalent, which makes Christ a being of equal rank with God his Father, and thus in fact makes three Gods, or objects of religious worship. If any article of faith be worth earnestly contending for, it is this.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I, Paul, an apostle particularly appointed by Jesus Christ himself, direct this epistle to those chosen people of God, in consequence of their faith in Christ, who are at Ephesus. May you enjoy all the blessings of the gospel which was the gift of God by Christ. Blessed be that great being who is the God and Father of Jesus Christ, as well as of all other men, who has given us this heavenly inheritance by Christ, according to the purpose which he had formed before the foundation of the world; that the Gentiles should become his peculiar people, and live holy lives, as becomes us, having of his mere goodness predetermined that we should be brought into the near relation of children to him by the gospel of Christ. This we ascribe to his distinguishing grace and goodness, in having brought us into this state of favour by Christ his beloved Son, granting us the forgiveness of our sins, and a complete deliverance from all evil

evil by his gospel, which was confirmed by his death and resurrection ; in the scheme of which the greatest wisdom is displayed.

God, has moreover, made us acquainted with this his original purpose in our favour, that, in the time which is now accomplished, he might unite into one body the whole human race, and give Christ power in heaven for that purpose ; by whom we, like his former people the Jews, have obtained an inheritance, which he had from the beginning destined for us. This his glorious purpose respects the Jews in the first instance ; and they were first called to the knowledge of the gospel ; but it was extended to the Gentiles also, as was manifest by the gift of the spirit being imparted to them, as well as to the Jewish converts. These gifts of the spirit are the earnest, or pledge, of the future glorious inheritance promised in the gospel.

Such being the blessings of the gospel, I rejoice in that faith and obedience which insures them to you, and I pray continually for your farther proficiency, that the great being, who is the God and Father of Jesus Christ, may impart to you more heavenly wisdom, enlightening your minds with the knowledge of the glorious hope to which you are called, and of the rich inheritance which he has prepared for all his people ; as his power has been already manifested in the gospel dispensation ; especially by raising up Christ from the dead, and giving him so much power in heaven and earth, for the use of his church ; which may be considered as a body of which he is the head, in the perfection and happiness

happiness of which will be displayed the power and wisdom of God, that God who is supreme over all.

Ch. II. The apostle continues to speak of the great blessings derived from the gospel, especially to the Gentiles, who were brought by it from a state of great ignorance and corruption, to the equal privileges of the children of God with the Jews.

1. Here the apostle has recourse to his favourite figure, supposing christians to be dead with Christ, and to be raised up together with him.

2. i. e. They were such persons who are commonly called children of the devil, who was supposed to have the command of those demons, which, according to the notions of those times, inhabited the air, and were always hovering about to do mischief. Thus, in the Old Testament, wicked men are called the sons of Belial, tho' it does not appear, that they who used the phrase, believed that there was any such person as Belial; and our Saviour said that the Scribes and Pharisees were of their father the devil.

3. We Jews who are little better than the Gentiles.

6. i. e. We are not only raised in, or by the resurrection of Christ, but may be considered as also ascended up to heaven with him, having attained to great honour and distinction in consequence of becoming christians, so that we may now be said to be in heaven, in comparison with our former situation.

9. i. e. The knowledge of the gospel, with all the advantages resulting from it, is the proper and free gift of God.

10. We

10. We are so far from being able to plead our being intitled to these privileges by our works, that we ourselves may be called the workmanship of God, being treated again, as it were, in the gospel, to a new and better life. We see here in what sense the apostle sometimes uses the term creation, applying it to the renovation of the world by the gospel, and whenever we read of the creation of all things by Jesus Christ, the language is to be explained by such passages as these, in which the true sense is most apparent, for here the mere renovation of mankind by the gospel is called a creation, and a christian is considered as a new creature.

14. Here the apostle uses a figure of speech borrowed from the Jewish ritual, representing Christ as a peace offering, by which both Jews and Gentiles approach the divine presence together ; and this shews that when he is called a sin offering, it can only be by another and similar figure, for the same thing could not be both a peace offering and a sin offering.

15. We are not to understand this too literally ; not that the Jews were under no obligation to observe the laws of Moses, but that this should be no bar to their considering the Gentiles as constituting the same body with themselves, and equally the objects of divine favour.

16. Here again the apostle considers the death of Christ as the death of that enmity which had before separated the Gentiles from the Jews.

17. i. e. To the Gentiles and the Jews.

22. This

22. This is a fine figure of speech in which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* are represented as composing one building, and that building resting upon the apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ a part of it, viz. the great corner stone, which keeps the whole together. For the corner stone was not the foundation stone, but placed at the upper angle of the building, and keeping the two walls together, by equally pressing upon both, and God is represented as the inhabitant of this building. Here also you see that in the idea of the apostle, Christ was a being of the same nature with his disciples, a part of the same building, and not the proprietor or inhabitant of it, for this was God. All the pre-eminence that Christ had, consisted in his being the corner stone, while his disciples were only common stones in the same building.

THE PARAPHRASE.

The power and goodness of God is manifested, not only in raising Jesus Christ from the dead, and giving him the power with which he is possessed, for the good of his church, but also in raising up you Gentiles from what may be called a state of death, in vice and wickedness, in which you indulged yourselves according to the abominable customs of the heathen world, as if you had been the professed worshippers of the devil; who is generally imagined to have at his devotion these mischievous spirits, who are supposed to inhabit the air, and whose children, it is customary to say, all wicked men are. Indeed, not the heathens only, but all mankind

kind, including us Jews, may be said to have been devoted to sin, both that which has its seat in the body, and that which is more properly confined to the mind, and in consequence of this we were all alike subject to the divine wrath.

But God, our compassionate Father, from the love that he bore to the works of his hands, when we were in this state of death, may be said to have raised us up to life, together with Christ, and remember that it is to the goodness of God that we are to ascribe that gospel by which this great and happy change is made in us. With Christ we are raised up from a state of death, and together with him may be said even to be ascended up into heaven, that his favour to us in the gospel may be the subject of praise in all future ages. And this gospel dispensation is nothing that we can plead any title to, but is the free gift of God. Had it been procured by any works of ours, like those of the law of Moses, in which the Jews pride themselves so much, we should have had cause of boasting. But in this case, instead of having worked, we ourselves may be called the workmanship of God, being created anew by the gospel, to another and a better life, for which it was the original design of God in the gospel to prepare us.

Carefully, therefore, impress upon your minds this consideration, that formerly ye were all uncircumcised heathens, being alike without the knowledge of God, and having no title to the blessings designed for the people of God; being the subjects of no promise, having no hope with respect to a future life, nor any knowledge or fear of God in the present. But since you have

have received the gospel, you, who were so far removed from the favour of God, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ, to use a figure borrowed from the Jewish ritual, being a common peace offering, by which Jews and Gentiles are together introduced into the divine presence, thus uniting them, and removing whatever it was that before separated them; the law of Moses which is still obligatory upon the Jews, being now no hindrance to their considering the Gentiles as one body with themselves, and equally the objects of the divine favour.

Thus the enmity which formerly subsisted between the Jews and Gentiles, may be said to have been slain in Christ, his one body being given upon the cross for both. Thus did he preach peace and reconciliation both to you Gentiles who were far from God, and to us Jews who were nearer to him. For, by means of the gospel, Jews and Gentiles, tho' still differing in some respects, have equal access unto God, by the gifts of the holy spirit, which are common to both. Henceforth, therefore, you Gentiles are no more to be considered as strangers, but as fellow citizens along with the Jews, and part of the proper household of God; being, together with the Jewish christians, built upon the same foundation with the apostles and prophets, and Christ being the corner stone. This glorious building, well compacted together, may be called an holy temple dedicated to God, who by his holy spirit dwells in it, and of this building you make a part.

Ch. III. The apostle continues to speak of the purpose of God to call the Gentiles to the knowledge of the

the gospel, as the great mystery or secret, that was particularly communicated to him, as the chief instrument in the hand of God of making it known to the world.

1. In order to engage their affection, he speaks of himself as suffering for their sakes.

2. i. e. Since you have heard of my particular commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

4. i. e. As you may perceive by my writings, meaning probably this epistle.

8. In this he refers to his having been a persecutor of the church. The *riches of Christ*, means the riches of the gospel of Christ:

9. It is natural to explain the phrase *Created all things by Jesus Christ*, by what the apostle had just before said, of creation, ch. ii, 10, *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. It is, no doubt, the same thing to which the apostle alludes in exactly similar language in both the cases. It was the new creation, or the renovation of men, or of the world by the gospel, and not the creation of the heavens and the earth; a notion, which I am confident, would never have come into the minds of any christians, who had not previously learned something like it in the principles of Platonism. In the idea of the apostles, the promulgation of the gospel made a new and great æra in the history of the world, from which things took, as it were, a new commencement, and this he figuratively calls a new creation, the great agent in which was Jesus Christ.

10. The apostle here speaks of angels, as learning and admiring the wisdom of God in the gospel. The apostle Peter also represents them as desiring to look in to those things.

12. By receiving the gospel we have the same access to the favour of God that the Jews had by the law of Moses, standing in as near, tho' it cannot be said to be the same, relation to him that they did.

THE PARAPHRASE.

To the carrying on of this glorious scheme of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, I, Paul, have intirely devoted myself, and at this time I am a prisoner on this very account. For you are well acquainted with my special commission for this purpose, respecting you and other Gentiles, how that Christ himself, as I have briefly informed you before, communicated to me this great discovery, by attending to which you will be sensible how thoroughly I must be acquainted with it.

This design of God was never fully understood before, but was reserved for the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, who are informed of it by the spirit of God, viz. that even the Gentiles without conforming to the laws of Moses, should be admitted to a participation in the divine favour, together with the Jews, being equally sharers in the blessings of the gospel. Of this I have the honour to be made a minister, according to the gracious appointment of God, of which the gifts of his spirit are evidences.

To

To me, who on account of my having persecuted the church of Christ, have no title to rank with the lowest christians, is this commission given ; that I might preach unto the Gentiles the invaluable blessings of the gospel, and that by my means chiefly, the Gentile world might be fully acquainted with this discovery, which God did not think proper to make to mankind till these days of the gospel. This makes a new dispensation in the order of things, as by this means the world may be said to be renovated, or created again. Even the angels may now see and admire the wonderful display of divine wisdom in the gospel dispensation, this having been the purpose of God from all eternity, tho' not carried into execution but by Jesus Christ. By believing in him however, even the Gentiles have freedom of access unto God.

In the remainder of the chapter the apostle concludes what he had to say concerning the excellence of the gospel, with a solemn prayer that the Ephesian christians might be truly sensible of the value of it, and be inspired with its spirit.

13. Ye ought to rejoice in my sufferings in so glorious a cause, in which you are yourselves so much interested.

14. It is observable that upon this occasion, and upon all others, the apostle speaks of himself as praying to God, and not to Christ, tho' upon this occasion in particular, and others in which the spread of the gospel was concerned, it would certainly have been more natural to pray to Christ, in preference to the Father, if he

had been God equal to the Father, and therefore the proper object of prayer.

15. Here also God or the Father is represented as at the head of all, and therefore, strictly speaking, the gospel is called the gospel of God, who is also called our Saviour in the highest sense ; whereas Christ is his servant in the publication of the gospel, and only our Saviour under him. As the whole family of which God is the head is here said to be in heaven as well as on earth, by that part of it which is in heaven the apostle probably meant Christ and the holy angels, who, acting in subservience to Christ, are considered as members of the same family.

19. The meaning of this is, that they might know the full value of the gospel and partake of the spirit of it. This is called being *filled with all the fullness of God*, because it is God who gives us this gospel, and the rich blessings of it.

21. Here you observe the genuine form of christian adoration, from which christians in after ages have so greatly departed ; it is to give glory to God through Christ, and not to Christ himself, as if he was equal to God, but only one by whose means glory was given to God. In the scriptures glory is never ascribed to God and to Christ at the same time, so that there is no pretence for supposing that they were considered by the apostles as entitled to equal honours.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Such being the glorious scheme of the gospel, and such the blessings of it, be not discouraged at my sufferings

sage in such a cause. I may be said, indeed, to suffer for you, but in this you ought rather to glory that the sense of the value of it will enable a man to bear such persecution. For this cause it is the subject of my earnest prayer to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, as members of his family, we all belong, including Christ and the holy angels who are in heaven, and us christians who are upon earth, that, as he is abundantly able, he would impart to you such inward strength to bear you up under the trials to which he may call you, that you may be so well grounded in the principles of christianity, as that Christ may be said to dwell in you, and that from a thorough knowledge and love of the gospel, you and all christians, may be able to comprehend the whole extent of it, and to be duly sensible of the unbounded love of Christ towards us ; that your hearts may be thoroughly possessed with it, and that it may be the great principle of action with you. And now, to close this part of my epistle, to him who is able to do more for us than we can ask, or even conceive, as appears by the power which he has already displayed towards us, to him be glory in the whole church by Jesus Christ to the end of all time.

Ch. IV. The apostle having finished his view of the scheme of the gospel, as comprehending Jews and Gentiles, who all make but one body, of which Christ is the head, and who are all of the same family of God, as bearing a near relation to him, proceeds to ground upon it some exhortations of a practical nature, especially to that mutual love and forbearance which members of the same family ought to have for each other.

By the stress which the apostle, here, and elsewhere, lays upon good morals, we see that this was the great object of the gospel, and in this respect it was essentially different from the religion of the Gentile world, which in reality had no connection with morals, as it consisted of nothing but superstitious observances, with which they thought the favour of their gods to be arbitrarily connected. So far was religion, properly so called, from teaching good morals to the Gentile world, that their temples, and the precincts of them, were often used for the vilest purposes. Accordingly, christians were soon distinguished from the heathens for their better morals. But this was not effected immediately, because it requires time for good principles to operate, and to produce their genuine fruits. On this account the apostles, finding the Gentile world in a very disorderly state, are so frequent and earnest in their exhortations with their new converts on this most important subject.

2. In this the apostle has a particular view to the pride of the Jews, and their aversion to the Gentile converts.

4. Nothing could more clearly prove the design of providence to call the Gentiles to the privilege of the gospel, without observing the law of Moses, than the descent of the holy spirit upon Cornelius and his friends, while they were uncircumcised. The apostle, therefore, willing that all christians should consider themselves as one body, frequently alludes to this circumstance, that they had all one spirit, and that God by this peculiar gift, made no difference among them.

6. Here the apostle enumerates the great things that all christians, Gentiles as well as Jews, had in common. They were all of one body, they had the gift of the same spirit, and had one common object; the hope of eternal life. They professed obedience to one Lord; Jesus Christ, and therefore had one faith into which they were equally baptized, and they stood in the same near relation to one God and father of all, who is over all, and whose influence extends to all things and all persons. Here, as every where else, Christ is evidently distinguished from God, who is expressly said to be over all, over Christ himself, as well as other beings.

7. Here the apostle observes, that tho' all christians are of one body, there are important distinctions among them, as among the members of the same natural body. All receive gifts from God, but they do not all receive the same gifts.

8. Here the apostle applies to Christ, what is said in the sixty eighth Psalm of God as triumphing over the Egyptians. He is figuratively described as a conqueror, leading his enemies captives, and bestowing largesses upon his friends; which it was the custom of those who triumphed to do, especially to those who had fought under them.

9. In this the apostle shews with what propriety this description may be applied to Christ. For an ascension implies a low situation from which to ascend, and this in the case of Christ was the grave into which he descended before he ascended into heaven; and this was done, as the apostle adds, that he might fill or rather

ther fulfil all things, or accomplish all the purposes of God, signified in the scriptures, which were also hereby fulfilled.

13. Among the gifts which Christ distributed on his triumph over death and the grave, the apostle enumerates all the offices in the christian church, which were various, according to its occasions, tho' all of them had the same object, the edification of a common body, and making each member perfectly to resemble Christ.

14. In this it is possible that the apostle might allude to the Gnostics, whose conduct in gaining proselytes, he frequently describes in similar terms, and who clearly appeared to have been at Ephesus, from the first epistle to Timothy who resided there.

* 16. Here the apostle describes all christians as making one well compacted body, each member perfect in its place, and proper for its due functions, by which means the whole body increases in its size and strength, and each member has a feeling for every other.

The apostle continues the practical exhortations which he began in the former part of this chapter, particularly cautioning the Ephesians against the vices to which they had been addicted in their heathen state.

17. i. e. Giving yourselves up to low and mean pursuits, the things of this world, whereas christians ought to feel themselves chiefly interested in the greater things of a future world, and to set their affections, as this apostle elsewhere says, on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; and to have their

their conversation in heaven, from whence they look for the return of their Lord and Saviour.

19. Here the apostle expresses in very strong emphatical language, the deplorable state of the heathen world, from their want of the true knowledge of God, and the great end of their own being, and the abominable vices to which they were addicted, and some of the worst of them under the cover of their religion.

24. The apostle here speaks of the great change that was made in men by christianity. It was in his idea nothing less than a new creation, a putting off of the old man, or a man's former self, and putting on a new man, undergoing an intire change in the temper and conduct.

25. A disregard of truth was too common even with the heathen moralists ; in opposition to this, therefore, the apostle recommends a strict regard to truth and integrity, as peculiarly becoming christians.

26. The apostle does not condemn all anger, as some heathen moralists did. He admits there might be just occasion for it, as well as for the exercise of any other passion, but it should be of short continuance, and a man's breast should always be quiet and composed when he goes to rest.

27. i. e. Do not yield to any temptation to sin, from whatever source it may arise. The apostle James says, then is a man tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed ; and our Saviour calls Peter, *Satan*, which is the Hebrew word for devil, when he made an improper suggestion to him, saying, *get thee behind me, Satan*,

29. The Greeks, and the heathens in general, were much addicted to obscene discourse, which christians should avoid with the greatest care. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and a person's usual conversation will shew what is uppermost in his thoughts, whether he is of this world, or a citizen of heaven.

30. Here the gifts of the spirit, with which the primitive christians were distinguished, are personified, as they were originally by Christ himself, and spoken of as a person residing within a man; and this person being the spirit of God, must be highly offended with any thing within a man that was unworthy of so holy an inhabitant. These gifts of the spirit are likewise compared to a seal set upon a man by God himself, marking them for his own peculiar property, which he will claim at the resurrection.

52. Or, as it ought to have been rendered, *by God in Christ*, that is, in, or by, the gospel of Christ, has forgiven you, the preacher of the gospel being instructed to teach the mercy of God to returning penitents, and the great object of the gospel being to reform the world, and bring them from a state of wickedness and vice unto God. God is said no where to forgive sin for the sake of Christ. The doctrine of the forgiveness of sin was taught by Moses, and all the prophets, without the least reference to Christ.

Nothing can be more encouraging to repenting sinners, than what we find in Moses, and especially in Ezekiel. When David prays for mercy, it is merely as a penitent

penitent, saying, forgive me for thy mercy's sake, or for thy name's sake.

It is a great injury to the character of the Divine Being to suppose that he does not forgive repenting sinners freely, without any satisfaction to his justice or the intercession of others. All that is necessary, is men's becoming proper objects of his mercy, which true repentance, and leading a new life will always make them. If this had not been the case, the divine conduct could never have been proposed to our imitation in this respect. Now, we are taught to pray that God would forgive us as we forgive others, and we are told that if our offending brother only repent, that we must forgive him. The Divine Being, therefore, no doubt, acts upon the same generous maxim.

Ch. V. The apostle still continues to admonish the Christians at Ephesus, to avoid the vices which the heathens were notoriously guilty of, especially fornication, which was encouraged in their religious rites, and for which the people at Ephesus, as well as at Corinth, were noted.

1. As God extends his mercy towards us, let us as his children, and in imitation of him, extend our love and good will to each other.

2. To our imitation of God let us add that of Christ, who to shew his love for us, gave himself up to death, as if, to allude to the Jewish rites, he had been sacrificed for us. As such he was a sacrifice peculiarly pleasing to God, as every instance of generous love to others is. Here Christ is represented in his death as a sacrifice

see, but it is only by way of figure, as any man dying in a good cause, may be said to be a sacrifice to it:

3. The word here rendered *covetousness*, signifies inordinate desire, and as it is here joined with uncleanness, it is generally thought to mean unnatural lust, to which the heathens were much addicted. But nothing of this kind, as the apostle justly observed, should be so much as named among christians, who are stiled *Saints*, or a peculiar people, devoted to an holy God.

4. The word here rendered *jestings*, means indecent allusions, in which much of the wit of the ancients consisted. Instead of this use of the tongue in conversation, the apostle recommends to christians, to distinguish themselves from their heathen neighbours by pious language, such as thanksgiving to God.

5. Here again, the word which we render *covetous*, refers rather to inordinate desires of a sensual nature. All the vices here mentioned, had been countenanced by the heathen religion, and it was not immediately that christians could think there was any great harm in them. But the apostle solemnly assures them that all persons addicted to these vices, would be certainly excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

The future state of happiness, is called *the kingdom of God, and of Christ*, God being the author, or giver, of it, and he employed Christ to bring men to it, making them fit for it by his gospel.

6. It appears from this, that the lewdness in which the Gentiles lived, was then thought by many to be very innocent, so that christians were in danger of being seduced by their representations.

8. It is a fine figure by which the heathen world is here represented as in a state of darkness, which is dispersed by the light of the gospel. As therefore, the works of the heathens might be called works of darkness, many of them being performed in the dark, the actions of christians should be such as will bear to be exhibited in the light. They should be honourable and respectable actions.

9. Many copies read, *fruits of the light*, which makes a better opposition to the works of darkness. But as the term spirit is used for the gospel, which was confirmed by the gifts of the spirit, the fruits of the spirit and those of the gospel light are the same.

12. i. e. In the secret mysteries of their religion, to which only select persons, who had tickets for that purpose, were admitted. These were generally of a very impure nature ; so far was the religion of the heathen world from being of any service to the morals of mankind.

13. Mr. W. renders, *whatever sheweth itself is become light*.

14. These words are not found in any part of the Old Testament, but it is possible that the apostle might allude to Isaiah LX, 1, where we read, *arise, shine, for thy light is come, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*, supposing, that this was meant of the times of the gospel, tho' it is most certain that it relates to the future glorious times of the Jewish nation.

15. This is a very important precept, peculiarly adapted to the christians, to whom the apostle was then writing.

writing, but very useful at all times, considering the many temptations with which we are continually beset.

16. i. e. Making the most of our time, and especially making up for what is past, and has been mispent, and, as it were, recovering it by double diligence in future.

18. Here the apostle contrasts the drunkenness of the heathens, in which they particularly indulged themselves at the festivals of their gods, in which they affected a kind of madness, and were guilty of the greatest extravagancies, with the noble enthusiasm with which the christians were seized, either during the actual exercise of the gifts of the spirit, or under a high sense of the gifts of the gospel, which was confirmed by them.

19. The primitive christians were noted for their observance of this advice, being frequently employed in singing spiritual hymns and psalms. One of the christian writers of early times, speaking of the impropriety of christians marrying heathens, says, what can they sing to one another?

20. Singing consists chiefly of thanksgiving, and this you see is here directed to God through Christ; christianity being the means by which glory is brought to God. Here, as upon all other occasions, you see the supremacy of one God the Father, and the subordination of Christ, as well as of other prophets, to him who is his God, as well as ours, and his father, or the author of his being, as well as ours.

21. That mutual deference and readiness to assist and oblige, was strongly inculcated by our Saviour, where
he

he said that they that would be the greatest, should be the servants of all ; and when he washed his disciples feet. But we see how little influence mere titles have upon manners, in the popes, who usurped all kinds of power, temporal and spiritual, while they stile themselves the servants of the servants of God.

27. The apostle having compared the relation between husband and wife, to that which subsists between Christ and the church, takes occasion to urge what he often insisted upon, viz. the great end of christianity, which was to reform the world by making men virtuous and holy.

32. The apostle having observed that the union between the husband and the wife was intended to be indissoluble, asserts the same concerning that between Christ and the church ; but there does not appear to be any thing new or peculiarly important in the observation, and therefore I do not see why it should be called a *great mystery*. By this term the apostle generally characterizes important communications made to him by Christ, and which he afterwards made known to others, but here it can hardly have that meaning. Probably the comparison struck him forcibly at the time, and so that he thought it worthy of particular attention, such as mysteries or secrets were entitled to.

Ch. VI. The apostle desirous that christians should distinguish themselves from their heathen neighbours, by the greater purity of their morals, proceeds in his exhortation to the observance of particular duties, insisting particularly upon the domestic duties, as those on which the happiness of human life chiefly depended.

1. It is reasonable in itself, independent of any law of God, it being the dictate of nature, and for the general good, that till persons come to the full use of their own reason, they should be under the direction of that of their parents, or other natural guardians, who are responsible for them.

3. There is a particular promise annexed to the observance of this commandment, viz. *that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest dwell long in the land which thy Lord thy God giveth thee.* There is, however, what may be called a promise, tho' of a more general nature, annexed to the second commandment, expressing the mercies of God to thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments. On this pretence, of the apostle saying that the fourth commandment is the first to which any promise is annexed, the Catholics have entirely omitted the second commandment, saying, that it is abolished by the gospel, the apostle not considering it as a commandment; and to preserve the number ten, they have divided the tenth commandment into two, thus endeavouring to hide from the common people, who could not forget that there were ten commandments, the prohibition of worshipping God by images, which is the subject of the second.

4. The apostle exhorts parents to treat children as rational creatures, and not with that harshness and severity which was common with the ancients, who had a power over their children, which the humanity of modern laws does not permit. But you see that they were to be more especially careful to instruct their children

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dren in the principles of religion, this being a thing of more consequence to them than any thing else that they could do for them.

8. These *servants* were properly *slaves*, the property of their masters, and some of these being treated, upon their conversion to christianity, as rational beings by the apostles and their fellow christians, were more sensible of the yoke of servitude, and there were not wanting, in those days, those who told them that their masters had no right to hold them in that abject state. To this doctrine they were too ready to give ear. But the apostle, sensible of what disservice this would be to the christian cause, urges upon christian slaves to render to their masters all the services that were required of them, and even to do it more cheerfully, as now lying under an additional obligation to the performance of every duty, being servants of God and of Christ, who would reward their obedience here, in a better state hereafter.

9. The apostle also gives proper admonition to masters, to forbear that rigorous and inhuman treatment of slaves, which was too common in that age. At Rome there was no more care taken of old and infirm slaves, by many persons, than of old horses with us. They were not indeed killed, but they were suffered to perish by hunger or disease. There was a particular island in the Tiber, in the view of all the city, where it was customary to expose them without food or shelter, where they soon perished.

The Greeks had more humanity, and in both countries there were slaves of better condition, and who were often employed as stewards to their masters, and

managed their most confidential affairs, and in many cases slaves were allowed to have some property of their own. Many of them also were persons of good education; and recommending themselves by their attachment to their masters, had their liberty given to them, either in the life time of their master's, or at their deaths. Of this superior class of slaves, who were respectable persons, there were many converts to christianity. But the common labouring slaves were treated in much the same manner as slaves are now treated by christians in the West Indies, and it is a disgrace to the christian name, that we should hold any of our fellow creatures, by nature fully equal to ourselves, in this degraded and unnatural state. Brutes are not capable of any thing higher than their own enjoyments and the service of man, and they do not suffer in mind from a sense of their degraded condition, and they have no domestic conditions to be torn asunder by a change of place or of masters, but men are capable of suffering most exquisitely on these accounts, which shews it to be equally cruel and unnatural to subject them to this treatment. I am sorry to add, that of all nations, the English are said to treat both their slaves and their labouring cattle with more cruelty than persons of any other nation.

We do not indeed find any express precept in the scriptures against the practice of slavery, but these books were not intended to contain a complete system of moral duties; particular precepts being given occasionally, as they were wanted. But christianity enforces every proper duty of natural religion, and its general maxims of justice and humanity, are particularly applicable to this case, especially

cially that golden rule of doing to others, as we would have others do to us. It is indeed true, that the mild spirit of christianity has greatly contributed to abolish slavery in this western part of the world, and it is not doubted, but that in time its happy influence will be felt every where, to the abolishing of slavery universally.

Slavery was certainly permitted under the Old Testament, but so were other things which christianity forbids, the world was then in its rude state, and greater refinement of manners is naturally expected from us in this advanced period.

The apostle having exhorted the christians to whom he is writing, to the observance of particular duties, in order to shew the superiority of christianity over heathenism, and the real power of the gospel to answer its great purpose, which was to reform the world, adds a motive to vigilance and exertion, from the difficult situation in which christians then were, having to contend with all the powers of the world, temporal and spiritual. He therefore represents them as in a state of warfare, and exhorts them to prepare themselves as for a close and obstinate engagement.

11. i. e. Let me earnestly exhort you to acquit yourselves with valour in the christian cause, supported by the principles and motives of the gospel. Provide yourselves with a complete suit of armour, offensive and defensive, proper to guard every part of the body, that no temptation to which you may be exposed may ever find you off your guard. Our combat is not with the body, but with the mind; and the principles that we

contend against are supported by all the powers in the world, civil and religious, by Jews and Gentiles.

12. What idea the apostle really had to the phrase *spiritual wickedness in high*, or as it ought to have been rendered, *in heavenly places*, it is not easy to say. By *heavenly places* he could not mean what is generally called heaven, the enemies of christians not being there. I am therefore rather inclined to think that the apostle by this phrase meant to intimate, that much of the opposition to christianity arose from the principles of Judaism, or what were generally thought to be such, their system having come from heaven, tho' it had been greatly perverted and misunderstood. This he might well oppose to mere heathen darkness, and by darkness the apostle generally meant heathenism.

Mr. W. renders, *against the wickedness of spiritual men in a heavenly dispensation*, i. e. against the Jewish governors.

13. i. e. Divine armour, which God has provided for us in the gospel.

16. This alludes to the custom of throwing fire into besieged places by means of arrows, and other missile weapons.

17. Here the apostle enumerates the principles of the gospel, and expresses them in a great variety of phrases, using as many terms as there were pieces of armour in those times. But we are not to expect an exact correspondence between those several terms and the use of the several pieces of armour; tho' by the help of a good imagination, such a correspondence may be made out. Truth, or integrity, the apostle makes

to correspond to the girdle or belt with which a soldier's garment was girded tight about him. *Righteousness*, or universal virtue, is the christian's breast plate. For shoes they were to have *the gospel of peace*, meaning perhaps a peaceable spirit. *Faith*, or the firm belief of the promises of the gospel, is our shield; and *the hope of salvation*, which must be in fact the same thing, is our helmet, and the *word of God* our sword. But, without any figure of speech, the great principles and motives of the gospel will, when properly attended to, be sufficient to guard us against all temptation; and it is owing to the want either of a firm belief of them, or inattention to them, that we ever fall into vice.

18. The phrase, *in the spirit*, generally means under the miraculous influence of the spirit of God, which was frequent in the age of the apostles, and it may be inferred from the epistles of Paul, that christians were sometimes under this influence in public prayer and singing hymns. In some places the apostle seems to make an obscure allusion to this supernatural effect, when he means nothing more than the general principles of the gospel, which was confirmed by them. In this, however, and in some other places, it is possible that the phrase *in the spirit*, may signify nothing more than great fervour of mind.

19. Earnest intercession for others is particularly recommended in the scriptures, and there is the same reason for praying for it as for praying for ourselves, because the interests of others ought to be as dear to us as our own. As to the efficacy of prayer in general

with God, to whom it is addressed, we must remain at a loss. It is enough for us that it is prescribed by God, who would not do it without sufficient reason. It is certainly well adapted to our present infant state, and has the happiest effect upon our minds. But whatever connection there be between our prayers and the blessings we pray for, or something equivalent, tho' seemingly the reverse of our prayers, we may be assured, that at this day there is nothing supernatural in it. We pray for our daily bread, and we thank God for it, but it is never given us except through the medium of our own labour, and the same, no doubt, is the case with the blessings of a spiritual nature. This is certain, that a sense of our dependance upon God for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, cannot be too deeply impressed upon the mind, and this can only be done by meditation and prayer.

By *mystery*, I must repeat to you, we are not in the scriptures to understand any thing that is above our comprehension, but only in portant truth that could not have been known without revelation, tho' perfectly intelligible when revealed.

20. It is a fine idea under which the apostle here exhibits himself. He was a prisoner and in bonds, but notwithstanding this, he considered himself as an ambassador, and from a power superior to any on earth.

22. Tychichus was a companion of Paul when he sent for the elders of Ephesus to Miletus, on his last journey to Jerusalem.

23 Here

23. Here, as upon all other occasions, God, or the Father, is spoken of as one being, and Jesus Christ, or our Lord, as another. The difference is that of God and man, which certainly ought not to be confounded.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO

TIMOTHY.

IT is most probable that this second epistle to Timothy was written not long after Paul's arrival at Rome, and in the spring or beginning of summer, as in it he presses him to come to him before winter, and in the other epistles of Paul from Rome, as those to the Colossians, Philipians, and Philemon, Timothy appears to have been with Paul, his name being joined to that of Paul in his salutations from that place.

The station of Timothy was in general at Ephesus, and it is probable that on Paul's last journey to Jerusalem he was left there, and that he was one of those who are said to have sorrowed so much at the words of Paul to the elders of that church, when he said that they should see his face no more.

The design of this epistle, besides pressing Timothy to come to him, was to encourage him to persevere in preaching the gospel, notwithstanding the opposition which it met with, the corruptions that would be introduced into it, and the degeneracy of many who bore the christian name. In this epistle there are evident allusions to the doctrine of the Gnostics, as there were in the first epistle to Timothy. It is probable, therefore, they were numerous at Ephesus as well as at Corinth.

2. These two verses may be thus paraphrased ; I Paul, particularly appointed by God to be an apostle of his son Jesus Christ, the great object of whose gospel is the revelation of a future life, direct this epistle to thee Timothy, whom I consider as my own son, being converted by me to the faith of Christ. May God grant thee all the blessings of the gospel.

4. In this perhaps he alludes to his tears, and those of the other elders of the church at Ephesus, when Paul took that affectionate leave of them, of which we have an account in the book of the Acts of the apostles.

5. It appears that Timothy's mother and grandmother were converted to christianity, as well as himself, and perhaps before himself, as from a child he had been taught the holy scriptures, tho' they might have been Jewish proselytes, or of those heathens, who in that age, like Cornelius, had the highest regard for the religion of the Jews, and were secretly worshippers of the one true God, tho' they were not properly proselytes to Judaism. This appears to have been the case with

with many in that age ; so that the religion of the Jews was not without its use with respect to the rest of the world, and the Jews being dispersed in all the provinces of the Roman empire, was a circumstance highly favourable to this great and excellent purpose, and likewise to the propagation of christianity afterwards.

6. Paul being an apostle, had, by laying his hands on Timothy, and praying for him, imparted to him those gifts of the spirit, which were peculiar to that age ; but it is probable that it depended in a great measure upon men themselves, whether they were more or less distinguished by them ; the divine being imparting them more freely to those who were most zealous and active in the christian cause. Indeed our Saviour intimated thus much, when he admonished his apostles that the power of calling out some kinds of demons was only to be obtained by prayer and fasting ; humility and devotion making them the proper subjects of such gifts.

7. In order to excite Timothy to zeal and activity in the christian cause, he reminds him that a true christian is distinguished by his intrepidity, by his universal benevolence, and also by his prudence. With this temper of mind a true christian has nothing to fear.

It is evident from the whole conduct of our Saviour and of the apostles, that they were no wild enthusiasts, but continued through life, and some of them lived to a considerable age, in the full possession of their right mind. That thousands of persons in that early age, when the facts on which christianity was founded were

were recent, and therefore easy to be investigated, should do the same, suffering all hardships for their profession of the gospel, many of them dying for it, and even by torture, rather than renounce the faith of the gospel, and especially that this should be the case with so many Jews, whose prejudices, as we see by those of them who were not converted, were so strong, is such an argument for the truth of christianity as can never be shaken. That christianity should establish itself in the world in these circumstances, without such miracles as are related in the New Testament, would be a much greater miracle than any of them, and a miracle of longer continuance than we suppose to have taken place.

8. i. e. Be not ashamed of the gospel, notwithstanding the circumstances of distress to which I, who preach it, am reduced, but be thou ready to partake with me in these sufferings for the sake of the gospel, the truth of which is evidenced by the power of God. He holds out to him, no prospects of advantage in this life. On the contrary, he was ready to lay down his own life in the christian cause, and hoped that his beloved Timothy would be as ready to do the same. Has this the air of an imposture?

9. The blessings of the gospel, or the hope of eternal life revealed in it, must be the free gift of God to his offspring of mankind. This blessing is here said to be given to men in Christ Jesus, before the world began, or before the eternal ages, but the meaning could only be, that it was then intended by God for them. We see

see here how familiar this language is with the sacred writers, things being said to be actually done by God when they could only be intended to be done. How natural then is it to interpret, what our Saviour says concerning the glory which he had with God before the world was, of the glory which was designed for him before the beginning of the world, which does not imply his pre-existence.

10. Here we see the great object and design of the gospel. It is to give men an assurance of a future life, an assurance which is particularly confirmed to us by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and notwithstanding all the corruptions of christianity, this one great doctrine was never in fact denied by any who ever bore the christian name. They have all expected to be rewarded or punished hereafter, according to their works here. Agreeing in this one great truth, we agree in every thing that is of primary use, and that has a practical influence in life. Compared to this all other things are of a far inferior nature.

12. Having before spoken of the gospel as giving men an assurance of a future life, he here mentions his own full assurance of it, for tho' he should die, yet in dying he committeth the custody of his life to God who gave it, and who in his due time, he was confident, would restore it to him.

14. He does not mean any particular creed, as some have supposed, but the general principles of the gospel.

15. Probably meaning the christians from Asia who were then in Rome.

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16: Onesiphorus was an inhabitant of Ephesus.

Ch. II. The apostle continues his earnest charge to Timothy to preserve the purity of the gospel, and especially to attend to the moral uses of it, and also to endure all hardships for the sake of it. There is something exceedingly affecting and edifying, in the manner in which this old servant of Christ writes to one much younger than himself, in the same service.

1. i. e. Be zealous in promoting the gospel. *The grace that is in Christ Jesus*, means the blessings which God bestows upon men by him.

2. In his instructions to others he was to give particular attention to the elders of churches, those whose duty it would be to teach others.

4. This is an exhortation to give his whole time to the study and teaching of christianity, and considering the activity that was required of a person in Timothy's situation, and the suffering to which he would be exposed in consequence of it, it is with the greatest propriety that he is styled a soldier. Indeed it is with the greatest propriety that this life in general is compared to a warfare, and that all christians are considered as soldiers, having to contend earnestly against many adversaries, whatever would draw us aside from our duty. We ought, therefore, to be both active and fearless as becomes soldiers.

5. One rule of wrestling in the Grecian schools, to which the apostle here alludes, was that the combatants should strip themselves. So the christian wrestler should disencumber himself of every thing that might impede his exertions.

6. It should have been rendered, *the husbandman must first labour and then partake of the fruits*, so that all these comparisons have the same object, viz. to inculcate activity and diligence in duty.

8. Here the apostle begins another subject of his address to Timothy, which was to guard him and others against the tenets of the Gnostic teachers, tho', in his usual manner, after first starting a subject, he easily digresses from it, and then returns to it again.

The Gnostics said that it was Jesus and not Christ, that was descended from David. In allusion, I think, to this opinion of theirs, the apostle here says, that Jesus Christ, meaning his whole person, was of the seed of David, his proper descendant, a man, like Jews or other men, and that he had a proper resurrection in the flesh, as a pattern of our resurrection, which the Gnostics explained away.

9. This was the pure gospel which Paul preached, and for which he was then suffering. But he here intimates, with pleasure, that tho' he was in bonds, the gospel was not, being propagated with success at that very time in Rome.

10. Seeing the progress of the gospel, which was the greater in consequence of what he suffered, he rejoiced in his sufferings.

12. This seems to have been a saying current among christians, derived mediately or immediately from our Saviour himself, and it must have been of great use to animate persons to persevere in the profession of the gospel. All christians have one interest with Christ their head. They contend, they suffer, and they triumph together.

13. Men may be faithless and desert the gospel, but on the part of God there cannot be any justifiable pretence for it, since he will certainly fulfil all his promises. He will not deny what he has engaged to perform.

14. These words, *to no profit*, refer to the idle fables and genealogies of the Gnostics, about the emanation of inferior intelligent beings from the Supreme, and their descent to the earth, which subverted the hearers, by giving them false ideas of the nature and object of the gospel.

15. The phrase *rightly dividing*, probably alludes to the business of a steward in a great family, who gives to each his portion in due season. Thus Timothy was to suit his admonitions to persons of all characters.

18. From this it is evident that the apostle meant the Gnostic's and likewise that he thought their tenets had in immoral tendency. As the Gnostic teachers were men of ingenuity, and dealt much in allegory, they thought that the christian resurrection could be nothing more than a new life, a state of vice being usually called a state of death, in the schools of philosophy, as well as by christian teachers. Also, believing the immortality of the soul, and holding matter in very great contempt, they were persuaded that the body would never rise again. But this was a dangerous doctrine, for other persons listening to them, and consequently believing that christianity taught nothing concerning a future life, but what had been known before of the immortality of the soul, for which they might not see sufficient

sufficient evidence, would reject the doctrine as they had been used to do; whereas the doctrine of the real resurrection of Christ in the flesh, as the pattern of a real universal resurrection, was a new and striking thing capable of producing the greatest effects:

19 The apostle, considering the Gnostics as having abandoned the proper faith of the gospel, here asserts the truth of it, and the solid foundation on which it is built, alluding at the same time to the custom of putting an inscription on the first stone in a building. The inscription he says that God has engraved upon the foundation of his church is, *the Lord knoweth all that are his*, i. e. he will distinguish and reward them. In what the apostle here says, there is perhaps a farther allusion to the language of Moses, in his contest with Korah, Dathan and Abiram, where the same words occur as pronounced by Moses, when he signified that God would distinguish, by a visible mark of his favour, those who were his friends from those who were not, after which the earth opened and swallowed up those who opposed Moses. Moses had also warned all the people to stand off, and depart from those men, lest they should suffer in their destruction. To this also the apostle may perhaps allude, when he here warns all christians to avoid such men, i. e. men who held such dangerous tenets, hostile to christianity and the moral uses of it.

20. By this the apostle seems to intimate, that we are not to expect that all christians will act in a manner becoming their profession, at least not equally so. Some

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will adorn it, others will act an indifferent and inferior part, and some will even disgrace it.

21. The great corruption of christianity in the time of the apostles, was the doctrine of the Gnostics. It suited the prevailing opinions of the times, and appeared very specious. Paul, therefore, thought that a man who could keep perfectly clear of this taint to his principles was a christian of high rank, and of great use in the church.

22. As Timothy was a young man, tho' a zealous christian, the apostle might think it not improper, to put him upon his guard against the faults, to which other young men are peculiarly prone.

23. Here he plainly adverts to the doctrine of the Gnostics, whose subtil discussions he often mentions with equal dislike and contempt.

26. Literally, that they may awaken from the snare of the Devil, alluding to a method of catching birds by giving them intoxicating feeds, by which means they were taken alive. This view he gives of some who were amused and captivated by the representations of the Gnostics, and this, and every thing else that was of an evil nature, was denominated Satan, or the devil, as the allegorical principle of all evil.

Ch. III. In order to make Timothy more vigilant in the discharge of his duty, the apostle, in this part of the epistle, apprises him of certain prophecies concerning a great degeneracy of men in the latter days, and their apostacy from the faith, tho' without acknowledging it. He, therefore, earnestly exhorts him to continue in the pure knowledge of the gospel, as it had been taught by himself,

himself, and to attend to the scriptures, the great uses of which he here enlarges upon.

1. It is evident from the epistles of Paul, and also those of Peter, Jude and John, that there were in the christian church, certain prophecies concerning a great apostacy from the faith and morals of the gospel in the latter days, or the last times, but we have no certain account of the origin of those prophecies. From the epistles of Peter and Jude, it would seem that they were prophecies current among the Jews, and prior to christianity, but admitted without scruple by the apostles, and delivered to their disciples.

As these prophecies are referred to by the apostle John, and some have thought that his book of Revelation was written prior to his gospel, or his epistles, it might be supposed that the source of these prophecies is to be looked for in that book. But if the passages in the epistles of Paul, in which mention is made of these prophecies, be compared with the book of Revelation, it will be evident that they must have had some other origin. For they are mentioned in the epistles to the Thessalonians, which were the first that were written by Paul, and no doubt prior to the book of Revelation.

Our Saviour himself apprized his hearers that tares would be sown among his wheat, and it is possible that he might enlarge upon this topic after his resurrection, when it is said that he discoursed with them concerning the things relating to the kingdom of God ; so that he might then give them a more particular account of this apostacy from the principles of his religion. This,

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however, is altogether conjecture, and as it may be thought that the minds of the apostles were not then sufficiently prepared for those discourses, it may be supposed more probable that these revelations were first made to Paul himself in the interviews that he had with Christ, especially as he declares that what he taught as the gospel, was not from any communication he had with any other apostles, but what he had been taught by Christ himself.

Whatever was the origin of these prophecies, no prediction was ever more completely fulfilled than this has been, and yet, when it was delivered, there was no appearance of any such thing. I cannot, however, help thinking, that the proper accomplishment of this prediction was in times much later than the apostles imagined. They saw the errors of the Gnostics, and the immorality of some of them, and concluded that those were the principles intended by the prophecy. Paul, indeed, expressly informs us that the man of sin was not then revealed, and yet they were principles in many respects similar to those of the Gnostics, and which had the same operation that, in a much later period, produced all the principal corruptions of the church of Rome. The apostle John expressly says, that there were even then many anti-christs, whereby it might be known that their's were the last times.

5. This is an enumeration of almost all the vices of men, which the apostle says were to abound in the last times, and among men professing godliness, and, therefore, in the christian church, That persons of that
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character then existed, is evident from Timothy being warned to turn from them; and they could not be any other than the Gnostic teachers. It should seem, therefore, that in the apostle's idea the evil had then begun to operate.

7. Such low cunning as this the priests and monks of the church of Rome have been notorious for, and the specious and insinuating manners of the Gnostics was also noted by the apostles and other christian writers. As these women are represented as learning what they were never capable of understanding, it is most probable it refers to the subtlety of the Gnostics, than which nothing could be more unintelligible, or give room for more doubt and disputation.

8. It is remarkable that the names of these two Egyptian magicians should be found here, and even in some of the heathen writings, and not occur in the books of Moses, which seem to have been the only authentic source of any knowledge that we can have concerning these transactions. If these names were preserved by mere tradition, there cannot be much dependance upon it; but it is a circumstance of little moment.

9. Great as was to be the corruption of christianity according to prophecy, it was to come to its termination, and to the utter confusion of those who promoted it. A few centuries saw the end of the extravagancies of the Gnostics, and as the power of the church of Rome is visibly on the decline, a few centuries more will probably extinguish all the remains of it, and every thing connected with it, when christianity will be purged

from all its corruptions ; and on this must be founded our hopes of the universal spread and glorious effects of it.

12. Here the apostle opposes his principles and conduct to those of the Gnostics, who in general avoided all persecution by complying with the demands of the times, and contented themselves with speculating concerning religion. As Timothy was a native of Lytra, he was particularly acquainted with the persecutions which Paul had met with during his first progress to preach the gospel, when he visited that place, and those in its neighbourhood, and he here forewarns him and all true christians, who will not abandon their principles, and the advantages attending the profession of them, that they must lay their account in suffering persecution, or meeting with trials in some form or other. In time of adversity or open persecution, we must not, as the apostle says, account even our lives dear unto us ; and in time of prosperity we must be upon our guard against, what is perhaps a still more formidable enemy, viz. the allurements to vice, and a sinful conformity to the world, with which times of peace and rest abound, and especially the ridicule of those who themselves go with the world. Neither fear nor shame should draw us aside from our duty.

13. One error leads to another, and one vice leads to another, and the degree of infatuation and wickedness to which some men arrive, and which they will even apologize for, would not be credited, if both history and observation did not prove it.

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15. By *scriptures*, the apostle could only mean the Jewish scriptures, in the knowledge of which Timothy had been educated by his mother and grandmother, who were Jewesses, tho' his father was a Gentile. Since, however, he permitted his son to be educated in this manner, he must have been a man who had a respect for the Jewish religion, which was the case with great numbers, who did not, by becoming proselytes, openly conform to it.

The Jews were, and to this day are, remarkable for making their children acquainted with the scriptures. At the earliest period possible they are all taught to read, and the Talmud mentions the age of five years, at which they are to read the scriptures. What a reflection is this upon christian countries, and even upon this of ours, in many parts of which a great majority of the common people cannot read at all, and with regard to many of whom better things might be expected; tho' their children are taught to read, they are very indifferent about their instruction in those things which it most of all concerns them to know.

To the Jewish scriptures the apostle exhorts Timothy to join the study of christianity, and they both make but one great scheme of revelation, and can never be separated.

16. This verse should have been rendered, *all scripture given, or which is given, by inspiration is profitable for the moral purposes here mentioned.* The intention of the apostle was not to make any declaration concerning the inspiration of the scriptures, but to shew the proper use of them in inculcating those good moral prin-

cipling from which so many persons at that time departed, and it will sufficiently justify his thus incidentally calling the scriptures inspired, if they were written by prophets or men inspired by God, or if any thing that they wrote had been delivered by particular commission from God, which no doubt many things contained in the scriptures were. But after having received a commission from God to deliver certain things, men were certainly capable of expressing them in words, and of committing them to writing without any farther inspiration, and, therefore, there is no occasion to suppose that, as writers, they had any inspiration at all.

Also, together with what they delivered as from God, which is easily distinguished, they might mix advices and admonitions of their own, and write in such a manner as, tho' it might manifest the best intentions, should discover the natural weakness of men. For as we read, their divine knowledge was like a treasure put into earthen vessels, in order that the power might more clearly appear to be of God. The weakness of the apostles as men, and as writers, in reality proves that, the doctrine they delivered was not their own, and that the power by which they were supported was from God only.

Ch. IV: The apostle concludes this excellent epistle with the most earnest exhortation to Timothy, to apply himself to the duties of his station, especially in opposing those who corrupted the gospel, and in the consideration of his own course being nearly finished; so that the work of preaching the gospel must devolve on other hands. He adds some directions of

) a miscellaneous nature, and salutations to and from particular persons.

2. There cannot be any charge more solemn than this, and as the duties of Timothy here enumerated, are no other than those of every minister of the gospel, not only ought all ministers to be zealous in the discharge of what they apprehend to be their duty, of which they are to give so solemn an account, but the people ought also to bear with their zeal, which is intended for their good, tho', in consequence of not giving the same degree of attention to the subject of religion, they may not immediately perceive the importance of some articles on which their ministers may see reason to lay great stress.

4. The doctrines to which the apostle here alludes were undoubtedly those of the Gnostics. He did not live long enough to see the rise of other and greater corruptions of christianity, tho' they were in some respects of a similar nature. As the Gnostics believed in a future state of rewards and punishments, tho' on a principle different from that of the apostle, viz. the natural immortality of the soul, there can be no doubt but had he lived to a later period, and seen the rise and progress of such doctrines as the trinity, original sin, predestination, and atonement, his indignation would have risen much higher than it did against any doctrines held by the Gnostics, because they were much farther removed from the genuine principles of christianity. Compared with the doctrines which I have just mentioned, which infringe upon the great article of the unity of God, and which derogate from the equitable

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principles

principles of his moral government, the notions of the Gnostics were only, what the apostle calls them, *idle fables*, diverting men's attention indeed from the serious principles of the gospel, but by no means so nearly affecting the proper character and influence of it.

6. Mr. W. renders, *I am offering my sacrifice, or making my libation*, i. e. in grateful acknowledgment to God for my victory.

8. With what satisfaction does the apostle here reflect upon his conduct as a preacher of the gospel, and what encouragement must this have given to Timothy, and ought to give to us, to follow him in the same work of zeal and labour of love. And let it always be considered, that the duties here mentioned are not peculiar to apostles, or even to ministers, but are in a great measure common to all christians, whose duty it unquestionably is, to instruct and admonish each other. Every christian, therefore, may consider himself as concerned in this exhortation and encouragement.

I cannot help observing in this place, that the rewards which the apostle expected, were in his idea to be conferred only at the time of the general resurrection, called by way of eminence *that day*, the time of the appearing of Jesus Christ, when he shall come to raise the dead and judge the world. Had he had any expectation of receiving the reward, or any part of the reward of his labours immediately after death, he could not have been so ungrateful as to have entirely overlooked it.

10. Not knowing the circumstances of the christians at Rome, we cannot judge of the degree of guilt incurred

incurred by these persons. Some have supposed that the first persecution by Nero, in which many were put to a cruel death, took place about this time ; and that these persons only fled on that account. There must at least have been some alarm of this kind, to have induced such a number of Paul's friends to desert him, at the time of his appearing before the emperor ; and as both Crescens and Titus, whose attachment to christianity was never questioned, are mentioned in the same connection, and the motives of their conduct are not particularly specified, it is not impossible but that this might be the case, and, therefore, that this censure of the apostle, who no doubt wished for his friends to stand by him, might be too harsh.

11. Luke appears to have been the faithful companion of Paul in his greatest troubles. As to Mark, notwithstanding Paul's displeasure at him on account of his deserting him and Barnabas on their first progress to preach the gospel, it appears by this circumstance that he was at this time entirely reconciled to him, and also that Mark had forgiven Paul for the displeasure, just or unjust, which he had conceived against him. It were to be wished that all the misunderstandings of christians might terminate in this manner.

13. What is here called a *cloak* might be, as the word will bear it, a kind of wrapper or portmanteau, and the *books* and *parchments* here mentioned might be some of its contents. We can hardly believe Paul to have been so very poor and destitute as to be so solicitous about a common cloak, which had been left by him probably several years before. By *parchments* were
probably

probably meant writings on different and better materials than what were generally used for books, parchment being the most durable substance for that purpose.

15. Alexander was so common a name in that age, that we cannot be sure whether this was that Alexander, the Jew of Ephesus, who harangued the populace at the time of the tumult. Also what evil it was that he had done to Paul does not appear. He expresses great displeasure at his conduct, but his wish that God would reward him according to his works, may perhaps imply more displeasure than in a cool moment he would have approved. However, he wishes him no more evil than God would see to be his due. As the apostle exhorts Timothy to be aware of him, it is on the whole most probable that this was Alexander of Ephesus, which appears to have been the usual station of Timothy. He may, therefore, be concluded to have been one of the Jewish Gnostics.

16. He probably alludes to his pleading before the person who was governor in Rome while Nero was in Greece. When he had his first hearing before Nero himself, Timothy was with him.

17. By *lion*, nobody doubts but that Paul meant the emperor Nero, who had then begun to assume the character of a brutal tyrant. But even in his presence the apostle seems to have spoken with so much courage, that several persons in the emperor's own household, were favourably impressed with respect to christianity.

22. Not Christ in person, but he wishes that the thought of Christ, and of his gospel, might be ever present

sent to his mind, and that thence he might derive consolation and courage in his faithful and laborious services.

No person can read these salutations from particular persons to particular persons, without being satisfied that this is a genuine epistle, written as other epistles of that age were. The circumstance of the cloak, and other minute particulars, give us, however, no idea of his writing from inspiration, because we cannot imagine any want of it to such a man as Paul, in writing such an epistle as this. But that such a letter as this should be written by him, in the circumstances in which he then was, is a very important consideration in favour of the truth of christianity, because the writing of such a letter cannot be accounted for without supposing the truth of the leading facts in the gospel history. And this epistle being written so near the time of the apostle's death, after a long course of laborious and painful services, sufficiently proves that he had no worldly views in his preaching, but that his object was faithfully to serve God by promoting the spirit of the gospel in this life, in the firm belief, which we may well conclude he would not take up and suffer so much for without good evidence, of that future life to which Christ would raise him at his second coming.

NOTES

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

THE christian church at Philippi was the first that was planted on the continent of Europe. There it was that Paul, accompanied by Silas, cured a woman who was disordered in her mind, and who brought her master much gain by telling fortunes, in consequence of which they were cast into prison, but being soon released, left the place. This was eleven years before the writing of this epistle.

The christians at Philippi were probably wealthy, and they were proportionably generous, as they contributed largely to the apostle's support in other places, with respect to which some churches had been too negligent, and they had not been unmindful of the apostle now that he was a prisoner at Rome, but had sent Epaphroditus, one of their body, with a contribution for his relief. This he gratefully acknowledges in this epistle, which is thought to have been written after Paul had been more than a year in Rome, A. D. 62. In his epistle from this place to Timothy, the apostle had urged him to come to him; but at the time of his writing this epistle he was with him, and joins in the salutations to the church.

One principal object of this epistle, as of many others of this apostle, is to exhort christians to persevere
in

in the purity of the gospel, and to resist the attempts of the judaizing teachers to sow divisions among them ; and especially to recommend their profession by a suitable life and conversation. The manner in which the apostle speaks of his own situation, and the satisfaction which he appears to have had in all that he had done and suffered for the sake of the gospel, is highly edifying. He appears at this time to have had the hope of being set at liberty, but says, that as to himself, it was a matter of perfect indifference whether he lived or died, provided his dying might be subservient, as he was confident that either of them would be, to the propagation of the gospel.

Ch. I. 1 By *bishops* the apostle could only mean the elders or presbyters of the church, to all of whom, as to those of the church of Ephesus, he gives the title of bishops or overseers. There could be no such thing in that age as a bishop of one church having a superintendence over the ministers of other churches. Whether Diocesan Episcopacy be an useful institution or not, there is nothing to countenance it in the scriptures; and the history of the church in later ages shews how liable it is to the grossest abuses, making the church of Christ to resemble the kingdoms of this world, by feeding the pride and ignorance of some churches and bishops, to the degradation and oppression of others.

5. The apostle here expresses the satisfaction that he had in having such persons as those of whom the church at Philippi consisted, for his fellow christians.

6. He was persuaded from their stedfast faith in the gospel, that they would persevere in the profession and practice

practice of it, so as to appear to advantage at the coming of Christ to judgment. This he ascribes to God, as the author of the gospel and of all good.

7. i. e. I consider you and myself as having one common interest, and that your sympathy for me is such, that whatever merit there may be in my sufferings for christianity, and my labours in the propagation of it, you share in it along with me.

8 My affection for you is equal to yours for me. I have that intense affection for you which Christ has for us all.

9. I pray that your attachment to the gospel may increase and shew itself by your knowledge of its principles, and your feeling of its influence; for such is more properly the meaning of the word which is here rendered *judgment*. It implies perception and feeling.

10. Thus the apostle prays for this church, that the members of it might distinguish themselves by every christian virtue, till the second coming of Christ; the principles of all virtue being inculcated in the gospel of Christ, the author of which is God, who is glorified by it.

12. The Philippians would naturally be concerned for Paul's sufferings, but he observes that every thing that had befallen him had contributed to the spread of the gospel.

13. His sufferings for the gospel were the subject of general conversation, and led many persons to enquire concerning it, in consequence of which many converts were made.

18. The friends of Paul were encouraged by his firmness to preach the gospel with the greatest boldness; and others who were probably judaizing teachers, of whom

whom, as appears by Paul's epistle to the Romans, there were many in that metropolis, preached it in such a manner as tended to disparage the apostle, thinking perhaps to mortify him, by preaching independently of him, and undervaluing him, and also preaching many doctrines that he did not approve, especially the universal obligation to adhere to the laws of Moses. Paul, however, rejoiced in this preaching of the gospel, for hereby converts would be made to it, and the evil that might be occasioned by the preaching of his enemies would in time be rectified.

19. He would so behave upon the occasion as that this, and every thing else, would turn out to its advantage.

20. He was determined so to behave, that whether he lived or died, the gospel of Christ, with which the best interests of mankind are connected, should be advanced. May this be the aim of all ministers of the gospel.

21. My life is devoted to this one object, the preaching of the gospel, and death, come when it will, will be an advantage to me, and therefore a thing desirable.

22. While I live I am employed in a laborious and useful service, so that I hardly know what to wish.

25. I am strongly drawn two different ways, by a desire to come to the close of this laborious life, in consequence of which I shall soon find myself with Christ at his second coming, which, with respect to myself, is certainly the more desirable of the two. But my continuing

tinuing here is more to your advantage. And I am persuaded that on this account I shall be continued with you some time longer.

Nothing can be inferred from this text in favour of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection. For the apostle considering his own situation, would naturally connect the end of this life, with the commencement of another and a better, as he would have no perception of any interval between them. That the apostle had no view to any state short of the coming of Christ to judgment, is evident from the phrase that he makes use of, viz. *being with Christ*, which can only take place at his second coming. For Christ himself has said that he would come again, and that he would take his disciples to himself, which clearly implies that they were not to be with him before that time.

Accordingly for many centuries after the notion of an intermediate state was advanced ; a notion which has been the foundation of the doctrine of purgatory, and many other absurd and mischievous opinions and practices in the church of Rome, and of no good whatever, it was never imagined that the departed souls were to be with Christ, but only in a place under ground, called Hades, where they were to wait till the resurrection of their bodies, at which time, and not before, it was supposed that they would be with Christ. The opinion of the soul going immediately to heaven was not advanced with any degree of confidence, by any christians, except the Gnostics, who believed in no resurrection at all, till about a thousand years after Christ.

30. This

CO. This is a noble and animating strain of exhortation. We are to rejoice even in our sufferings for the sake of the gospel, and to consider all trials of this kind as a special mark of favour, having thereby an occasion given us of distinguishing ourselves more than others, and consequently of obtaining a more distinguished reward.

Ch. II. In this part of the epistle the apostle continues to urge the practice of christian virtues, especially that of humility, in opposition to the spirit of factions, which shewed itself in several of the primitive churches, owing at first to the interference of the judaizing teachers, and then to that of the Gnostics. This virtue he presses upon them by the example of Christ, who was distinguished as much by his condescension and humility, as he was by the extraordinary power with which God had endued him, and who on this account was advanced to the most distinguished honour. He also repeats his profession of readiness to serve them and the christian cause, tho' at the expence of his life.

2. This is an earnest form of exhortation to brotherly love, which shews of how much importance this christian virtue was in the eyes of this apostle. If, says he, there be any advantage in the principles of the gospel, and especially any exercise of that brotherly love which it eminently inculcates, if we as christians partake of the same gift of the spirit, and if we be capable of that intense affection which becomes persons who have so many things in common, do you make me completely happy by seeing those valuable fruits of the gospel among you.

4. This was far from being meant to encourage, or excuse an impertinent curiosity into the affairs of others, but to inculcate a fellow feeling for them in their distresses, reminding them that no man is born unto the world in order to live to himself, but that he is a member of a great body of fellow men, and fellow christians, for whose interest he should be concerned as for his own.

7. In order to enforce this exhortation to humility, the apostle dwells more particularly on the example of Christ, who shewed his humility by making no ostentatious display of those extraordinary powers with which he was invested. Yet from this very text, mistranslated and misunderstood, an argument has been drawn, not only for the pre-existence of Christ, but for his perfect equality with God his Father, evidently contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, which always represents any power that Christ had more than other men, as not originally his own, but imparted to him by God.

The true sense of the passage is as follows, who being in the form of God, even in an higher sense than Adam was, he did not, like him, aim at being as God, but humbled himself. That the apostle here alludes to the case of Adam, is highly probable, from his mentioning the two circumstances of his being in the image of God, and that of his wishing to be as God, and he elsewhere calls Christ the second Adam, being the first as it were of a new race of men, the head of the new creation. According to the old interpretations of this text, all that was intended to express the dignity of Christ, is contained in the first clause, *being in the form of God*, and from this

this clause all that follows expresses his humility, in not aiming at more, but, on the contrary, humbling himself, even contenting himself with the lowest condition of humanity, viz. that of a servant or rather of a slave, and even submitting to die that kind of death to which only slaves, and the most contemptible persons were exposed, as is expressed in the two following verses.

8. i. e. Remember that he was a mere man as others are ; he assumed nothing above or inconsistent with that character.

11. Whether the apostle annexed any distinct ideas to these phrases, or only meant to give one general idea of the great power to which God had raised Christ, is not very certain. The phrase *heaven and earth* might have been a kind of proverbial expression, denoting the universe in general. Thus when our Saviour said that all power was given to him in heaven and in earth, he might only mean that he was appointed supreme in every thing that respected the christian church. But it has been conjectured that *the things in heaven, the things in earth, and the things under the earth*, in this place, may refer to the threefold division of the heathen gods, some of whom were said to have power in heaven, others upon earth, and others under the earth, or among the ghosts of the dead ; intimating that all these heathen deities would fall before the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, or that idolatry in all its forms would fall before it. This interpretation appears to me not improbable.

That the meaning of the apostle in this passage could not be to represent Christ as originally equal to God

the Father, is most evident from his here speaking of his advancement as derived from God, saying, *wherefore God has highly exalted him*. If, according to our translation, it had been no robbery in Christ to be fully equal to God, how could he receive any thing from God, and how could the glory of the gospel dispensation be referred to the Father rather than to Christ, who, if he was God, was certainly better intitled to it, than he who, according to the common notion, had no other merit than that of consenting that Christ, a person fully equal to himself, should become man, suffer and die? Certainly that divine person who condescended to all this is much more entitled to our gratitude, than he who remained in heaven, and only permitted this to be done by another.

13. As a motive to constant vigilance and exertion in the christian cause, the apostle reminds the Philippians of the great goodness of God, who by giving the gospel, in reality does every thing for us; the principles of the gospel, which come from God, being the thing that animates us and engages us to act as we ought to do in life. When God had done this, and had given us in the faith and hope of the gospel, every reasonable motive to exert ourselves, there could not be any occasion to do more. It is unquestionably God who works in us and for us, but not immediately. It is always in the regular course of nature, by supplying us with principles and motives adapted to work upon us. But nothing is more common than for persons to say they did a thing, when they were only the cause of others doing it; and this is as applicable to the case of God as to that

that of man. The contrary idea of the immediate agency of God upon the minds of men, independently of the natural power of motives, has been the source of much enthusiasm and the most miserable and mischievous delusion. We should always consider how it is that God does other things which he is said to do for us, and particularly his giving us our daily bread. Tho' he does give us this, and we therefore pray to him and thank him for it, he does not give it to us without our own labour. His immediate hand is never seen in it.

16. Here the apostle speaks of his *rejoicing in the day of Christ*, i. e. at his coming to raise the dead and judge the world, and not of any thing prior to that event.

17. Here is an allusion to the custom of sacrificing, in which wine and oil were poured upon the victim. The apostle compares the faith of the Philippians and the fruits of it, to the victim, and himself to this libation which accompanies it, intimating that he would cheerfully give up his life to promote their faith in the gospel.

19. He had just before spoken of his readiness to suffer in the cause of christianity, and exhorted them not to be cast down, but to rejoice and be encouraged by that circumstance. However, he here intimates that he should not suffer immediately, but that he should probably have time to send to them and hear of their situation.

21. i. e. There were few so wholly devoted to the service of the gospel, and who paid so little regard to their

their own ease and safety as Timothy. He had before expressed some chagrin at the conduct of Demas, and even that of Crescens and Titus, for deserting him and consulting their own safety by flight.

22. Timothy as well as Silas had been the companions of Paul, when he first visited Philippi, in order to preach the gospel there ; tho' Silas only had been imprisoned with him in that place.

25. It has been observed that the Philippians had been more generous in relieving the wants of the apostle than other churches ; that they had sent to his assistance during his residence in the southern parts of Greece, and now during his confinement at Rome.

27. It is most evident from this that the apostles, had not the power of working miracles at pleasure, for their own relief, or that of their suffering brethren. Otherwise, Paul, no doubt, would not have suffered this Epaphroditus whom he esteemed so highly, and others of his fellow christians whose sickness he mentions, and whose lives he imagined to be of value for the propagation of the gospel, to continue in circumstances so painful to themselves, and so detrimental to the cause in which they were engaged. Miraculous power does not appear to have been in any case subject to the will of men, our Saviour and the apostles always feeling a natural impulse upon their minds, whenever divine wisdom judged a miracle to be proper.

With respect to the miraculous healing of sickness, it was observable that it was seldom exerted in favour of the preachers of the gospel, but generally of indifferent persons, tho' they might afterwards be won upon
by

by such marks of divine favour to embrace the gospel. By this means the evidence of the miracles was less liable to suspicion. Thus the man who was born blind, cured by our Saviour, and the lame man who begged at the gate of the temple, cured by Peter and John, were peculiarly proper subjects of miracles, as besides the incurable nature of their disorders, and the notoriety of their persons, they could not be suspected of any collusion with those who relieved them.

30. He ran all risques, even of his life, to do me that service which you would have done in your own persons, if it had been in your power.

Ch. III. In this part of the epistle the apostle exhorts the christians at Philippi to be upon their guard against the judaizing teachers, who depraved the gospel, and introduced dissensions among them. He particularly animadverts upon their pride and conceit, and shews his own humility by way of contrast to their disposition, tho' he declares that he had as just ground as any of them, in his prerogatives as a Jew.

1. In all events, in the case of my suffering or your's, rejoice in the faith and hope of the gospel. All our sufferings are temporary, and will be finally subservient to the furtherance of the gospel. It is no great trouble to me to remind you of these things, and to you these repeated admonitions may be useful, considering the circumstances in which you are, especially with respect to the judaizing teachers, who insinuate themselves among you.

2. It was customary with the Jews, as well as with other oriental nations, to denote particular characters

by the names of those animals in which they predominate. Thus our Saviour advises his disciples not to cast their pearls before *swine*, and he calls Herod of Galilee a *fox*; and here the name *dog* probably means persons of a quarrelsome disposition, who are always ready to promote contention and division, which was the character of those judaizing teachers, who set themselves up to oppose the apostle in Galatia, Corinth, and almost all other places, urging the necessity of the observance of the ceremonial law of Moses, tho' they themselves shamefully neglected the moral precepts of it.

3. By *circumcision* the apostle probably meant to express his contempt for mere circumcision, as nothing more than the cutting away of the flesh, the Jews boasting of this rite, as if of itself it was of great avail in the sight of God. In opposition to them, he calls the christians those of the true circumcision, which, as he elsewhere says, *is of the heart, whose praise is not of men, but of God*. We are not however to infer from this that the apostle undervalued circumcision, or any other part of the Jewish ritual. Had he thought the law of Moses to be abolished by the gospel, with respect to the Jews, he certainly would never have circumcised Timothy, especially as his mother only, and not his father, was of Jewish extraction. All that he says in contempt of the Jewish observances, is only to be understood of them in comparison of moral virtues, on which alone any stress is laid in the gospel, and which the superstitious attachment of the Jews to their ceremonies led them to neglect.

4. As the apostle was undervalued by those Jewish teachers, who laid so much stress on the ceremonial part of the law of Moses, he shews that if the things upon which they laid so much stress were of consequence, he himself had as much to boast of in that way as any of them.

By *Hebrew of Hebrews*, was probably meant a person whose father and mother were both Hebrews.

As a Pharisee, he was a believer in the doctrine of a resurrection, on principles independent of those of christianity.

6. i. e. Having punctually observed all the rites of the law of Moses.

7. We are not to interpret this as if the apostle meant that the Jewish customs were a disadvantage, and as such to be rejected; but only that they were as nothing, and less than nothing, compared with the advantages of christianity.

8. This may allude to the custom of mariners throwing into the sea the most valuable of their commodities, when their lives were in danger.

By the *knowledge of Christ Jesus* we are to understand a knowledge of christianity, so also by *winning Christ* is to be understood gaining the rewards of christianity. With Christ himself, personally considered, we cannot have any thing to do, and the manner in which many enthusiastic persons have expressed themselves on this subject is highly reprehensible.

9. This expression, *being found in Christ*, which has been so much abused by ignorant and enthusiastic persons, means nothing more than continuing in the profession

session of christianity. Also by his *own righteousness* which was of the law, the apostle means not moral virtue, which he was very far from undervaluing, but that kind of righteousness of which the Jewish teachers made so great a boast, viz. the mere observance of the Mosaic ritual, and *that righteousness which is by faith in Christ* means that virtue, or ground of justification in the sight of God, which is taught in the gospel independently of the law.

11. Here we have a repetition of that allusion to the death and resurrection of Christ, as a moral emblem of the death of sin. and a life of holiness, which is so frequent in the writings of this apostle; tho' he might also mean the moral influence of the gospel, derived from the consideration of the resurrection of Christ, by which it was confirmed; also to his sufferings in the same cause with Christ, and his expectation of the same reward after death; *the resurrection of the dead*, here meaning an happy resurrection to eternal life. From many other expressions it appears that the apostle did not consider the sufferings of Christ as of a peculiar nature, having any other cause or effect than the sufferings of other good men in a good cause. The public death of Christ was absolutely necessary, as a preparation to the proper evidence of his resurrection. Had he died a natural death and then appeared again, it might have been said that he had never died at all. It was, therefore, wisely ordered in the course of divine providence, that his death should be as public as possible. As to the resurrection of Jesus, I have frequently shewn, that it
was

was so circumstanced, as to have the highest degree of credibility at this distance of time.

12. Here is an allusion to the Grecian games, and the prizes obtained in them. Wishing to attain distinguished excellence, as a professor and preacher of the gospel. Playing upon the word, which is no uncommon thing with this and other writers, he represents himself as made a prize of by Christ, while he himself is desirous of obtaining that for which Christ made a prize of him.

14. This is said in opposition to the pride and conceit of the Jewish teachers, who boasted of their perfect observance of the law. The apostle disclaims all such pretensions to perfection, professing that he was always aiming at some higher degree of excellence than he had yet attained to. This will ever be the disposition of a mind truly virtuous. Every man who knows himself, will be sensible of his imperfections, and if he be a good man he will be continually striving to remove them, and make nearer approaches to perfection. For this purpose, nothing is proposed to us as the termination of our aims, short of the divine character itself, being exhorted by our Saviour *to be perfect, as our Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.*

15. This is an allusion to the religions of the heathen world, some persons being admitted to the secrets or mysteries of them, and others not; the former being called the initiated. With respect to christianity, the apostle says none are so perfect, so initiated, so well instructed in the principles of it, but that they ought to be continually aiming at more knowledge, and

and especially a more careful practice of it. He adds, if any among you, meaning the judaizing teachers, think otherwise, boasting of the proficiency you have already made, and thinking that you need no farther instruction, God I hope will convince you of your error and excite you to greater diligence.

16. There is something imperfect in the construction of this verse, and the meaning of the writer is by no means clear. It is perhaps as follows, notwithstanding the difference of our attainments and opinions, we are all so far agreed with respect to the rule of life, or the gospel, as to acknowledge the value of mutual affection and harmony, to which I am exhorting you:

19. It is evident, as I have frequently observed, that there was much licentiousness among some of the early Gnostics, and that they apologized for their vices by their principles, and therefore the apostle argued against their principles, by exposing the immoral consequences of them.

Whatever any persons may profess of friendship to Christ, and respect for the gospel, if their lives be not governed by the moral precepts of it, they are to be ranked with its enemies, their conduct tending to bring it into disgrace. Such are all those, whose chief object of pursuit is this world, or the things of it.

20. This is the most important of all considerations. Christians should ever consider themselves as citizens of heaven, for the word, in the original, should have been rendered *citizenship*, and not *conversation*: Our king or sovereign, who was not of this world, and whose kingdom was not of it, is now in heaven, and if we here
below,

'below, behave as the proper subjects of his spiritual kingdom, he will in due time come again and take us to himself, to our proper country. I would observe, however, that according to this representation, we have nothing to expect from our king and Saviour before his coming to raise the dead and judge the world.

CH. IV. 2. Possibly these two persons had some difference, and the apostle is exhorting them to unanimity, at least as far as the gospel was concerned, that its interests might not be obstructed by their differences.

3 Who Paul meant by his *yoke fellow* does not appear, but it was probably some among them who had been eminently assisting to him, in his planting the gospel in that place. In the acts of the apostles, we find frequent mention made of women of eminence, who greatly distinguished themselves in promoting the gospel, not by preaching, but in various other ways peculiarly useful and effectual.

The *book of life* is a Jewish idiom, and a very expressive one, as if God kept a book in which the names of all virtuous and good men were enrolled, that they might never be forgotten, and especially that their good works might be remembered and rewarded at the great day of account.

4. Here the apostle, drawing towards the close of his epistle, gives some general exhortations of peculiar importance, and he urges them with peculiar force; but in most of them he has a view to the principles, the temper and the practices of the Gnostics.

Whatever be your difficulties from abroad, or among yourselves, rejoice in the faith and hope of the gospel.

gospel. All that you can suffer is but for a time, and will be infinitely overbalanced by the infinite rewards, to which your proper conduct under them will intitle you.

This *moderation* or rather gentleness, is properly opposed to the pride of the Gnostics. But it may also be understood of a proper indifference to all earthly things, the propriety of which is evident from the consideration of the shortness of life, and the dissolution of all things at the coming of Christ to judgment. We should, therefore, *rejoice as tho' we rejoiced not, and weep as tho' we wept not, since the fashion of this world passeth away.*

6. i. e. Be not oppressed with anxiety about any thing in this world, but in the practice of your duty refer yourselves to the overruling providence of God.

7. *Peace* signifies happiness in general, and *the peace of God* may mean great happiness, as the *river of God* signifies a large river, or *the peace of God* may signify such peace or happiness as God alone can bestow. The apostle here prays that continuing in the profession of the gospel, they may be possessed of this happiness, and that their hearts may feel the influence of it. It is in other words praying, that they may always rejoice in the faith and hope of the gospel.

8. We see here the great object and end of christianity. It is to make us good men and useful citizens: What is good, useful, and praise-worthy we all know, and the principles of the gospel should engage us to practice it.

9. It is happy when the preachers of the gospel can thus propose their own example for the imitation of their hearers, and certainly none ought to preach the gospel but those, who, besides understanding the principles of it, can likewise recommend and enforce it by their own conduct, whose lives are at least not flagrantly contrary to it.

~ The apostle concludes his epistle with mentioning particular circumstances, relating to himself and the persons to whom he wrote, and with salutations from and to particular persons; all which are the most unequivocal marks of the genuineness of the epistle. Indeed, there are no epistles remaining, from all antiquity, which bear such indisputable marks of genuineness as these of Paul, and as I have observed, the genuineness of these epistles sufficiently proves the truth of christianity. For it is impossible to account for the writing of such epistles as these, without admitting the reality of the principal facts on which the truth of christianity depends, and these epistles were written prior to any of the gospels.

10. The christians at Philippi had been particularly attentive to the circumstances of the apostle, and had contributed to the supply of his wants. That they did not send to his relief immediately upon his arrival at Rome he attributes to their having had no opportunity of doing it till the coming of Epaphroditus. It is observable, however, that the apostle thanks God for their generosity to him. Men are only the instruments in the hands of providence. The first and proper cause of all good is God. But I would observe also, that God
works

works only by second causes, and not immediately, for that would be by miracles, which we are not now authorized to expect.

13. Not that I complain of any state of want that I have been in. I am so much a christian, so well initiated in the principles of christianity, that I can acquiesce and even rejoice in all conditions, adverse as well as prosperous. The principles and motives of the gospel are abundantly sufficient for this purpose. Here again, as on many former occasions, I would observe, that by the term *Christ* we are not to understand the person of Christ, but his doctrine, or the principles of the christian religion, which alone, without any other supernatural aid, can enable men to overcome the world, and behave with propriety in it.

15. *The beginning of the gospel* means the apostle beginning to preach the gospel in Greece, Philippi being the first place in which he first preached after he left the continent of Asia.

16. Both at Thessalonica and at Corinth Paul had subsisted chiefly by the labour of his hands. This the christians at Philippi had probably heard of, and on that account had sent to his relief.

17. This is a sentiment worthy of an apostle, negligent with respect to himself, and attentive only to others. He rejoiced not that his own wants were relieved, but in the generosity and virtue which had been manifested in that relief.

18. We see how familiar to the Jews were the rites of their religion, and how they supplied them with a constant source of figures of speech. If a present of money

ney was called a *sacrifice well pleasing to God*, can we be surprized that so heroical an act of virtue as that which Christ manifested in his death, should also be called a *sacrifice well pleasing to God*. How then can we be authorized from such phrases as these, to suppose that the death of Christ was a sacrifice in any other sense than that in which this contribution of the christians at Philippi to Paul was called a sacrifice, or than prayer, or any other part of our duty, may be called a sacrifice, and yet the death of Christ has been considered so much a sacrifice, as by this means alone the anger of God against sin, has been appeased, and that by this means only, he has become propitious to offending sinners.

19. i. e. His glorious riches, or that glory and happiness which God reserves for the righteous in a future state, to which Christ will receive all his followers, when he shall come with power and great glory at the last day.

20. Here again I would observe, what is conspicuous through all the New Testament, that God and the Father are synonymous terms, neither Christ nor any other person being so much as called God, and that to the Father alone is glory in the highest sense ascribed, he being the author of all good, and Christ his minister or servant in communicating blessings to mankind.

22. By *saints* in this place we are not to understand what was meant by that term in after ages, persons of greater sanctity than others, and least of all persons abstracted from the world and the duties of it, but simply

christians, persons professing christianity, and thereby constituting the church and people of God, as the Jews had been before, who were called an holy and peculiar people, as standing in a nearer relation to God than other nations.

23. i. c. May you partake of all the blessings of the gospel, here and hereafter, and may this be the happy lot of us all ; and this we may be assured will be the case, if we diligently study the principles of christianity and above all be careful to practice the duties which it inculcates.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

CHAP. I. 1. Colosse was a considerable city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, where there appears to have been a christian church pretty early, but by whom it was planted is unknown ; but it was probably by some of Paul's fellow labourers, during his long residence at Ephesus, in that neighbourhood. This epistle to the christians in that place, appears to have been written sometime before the end of the year 62, and to have been sent, along with that of Philemon, by Tychicus
and

and Onesimus, while Paul was yet a prisoner at Rome, but when he had a prospect of being released.

The general strain of this epistle is very much the same as that to the Ephesians. In both of them the object of the apostle is to establish those to whom he wrote in the true faith of the gospel, in opposition to the corruptions of it by the Jewish Gnostics, and to urge the practice of moral duties, which the Gnostics, too much occupied as it might seem in matters of speculation, probably neglected, and some of which they explained away.

3. You see how in each of these verses the term *God* is appropriated to the Father, when Christ is mentioned at the same time, which is a clear proof that the writer did not consider Christ himself as God, or in any sense entitled to that appellation. In the last of these verses God is called *the God and Father of Christ himself*. What more could have been said by any unitarian? It is the same being that is called our God and Father, and to whom our Saviour himself always prayed under the character of his God and Father. Where, therefore, is the evidence of Christ having any nature superior to our's?

4. It does not follow from this expression that Paul had not himself been at Colosse, or that he had not even planted the gospel there, for the same language is found in the epistle to the Ephesians, but it appears from other circumstances. Paul had been long absent from that part of the world, and therefore required to be informed by others of the state of the churches in it, some of them adhering to the pure faith of the gospel,

and others deviating from it, by adopting the notions of the judaizing Gnostics.

5. The meaning probably is, that the apostle gave God thanks, or rejoiced in the prospect of the great happiness that was reserved for the faithful disciples of Christ; the fourth verse and part of the third being to be read as in a parenthesis.

6. i. e. Were instructed in the true principles of the gospel.

7. Epaphras appears to have been of Colosse, sent to Rome to visit the apostle in his imprisonment, and perhaps for his officious zeal in his behalf to have been confined himself, for in the epistle to Philemon Paul calls him his fellow prisoner.

9. It is not necessary to distinguish nicely between the meaning of these different words, as the apostle does not appear to have given much attention to his language. He meant only to express his wish that those christians might have a perfect knowledge of the gospel in all its extent. This is called spiritual wisdom, in opposition to that which is carnal, or has no connection with christian virtue.

10. The great object of this wisdom or spiritual understanding was to lead them to a life of virtue and holiness, having such a knowledge of God and of the gospel as would produce the fruits of righteousness, with which God is always well pleased.

11. i. e. May your knowledge of christianity, and your steady faith in the great principles of it, enable you to bear with cheerfulness all the sufferings to which you may be exposed,

12. The

12. The object of prayer and thanksgiving you see is the *Father*, even in things relating to the gospel, with respect to which prayer would, no doubt, have been addressed to Christ, if he had been the proper object of prayer at all. The apostle here thanks God for giving the Colossians such a share or portion as all sincere christians will have in a future state of glory and happiness, alluding probably to the division of the land of Canaan among the Israelites, in which each tribe had its respective share or portion allotted to it.

13. Vice and ignorance are very aptly in the scriptures called a state of *darkness*, in opposition to which christianity is called a state of light, as the apostle elsewhere says, *Now are ye light in the Lord*.

14. *Redemption* means deliverance. To deliver mankind from a state of heathen darkness, in which they were abandoned to vice here, and consequently to misery hereafter, and to bring them into a state of gospel light in which they would be made virtuous and happy, Christ submitted even to death. This is the most natural meaning of this passage, which is far from implying that Christ redeemed mankind from the punishment due to sin, by dying in their stead, becoming the object of God's wrath for us. God the righteous judge can never so confound the innocent and the guilty.

15. All men in one sense bear the image of God, but Christ in a more perfect manner, as making a nearer approach to the perfections of the divine character. The *first born* means the most excellent and distin-

guished, enjoying certain privileges and prerogatives above those children which were born afterwards. But tho' Christ is called our first born or elder brother, it is so far from implying that he is of a rank superior to ourselves, that it even clearly implies that he is of no higher rank at all, being only the first of the same family, and consequently a creature and a man. Being such, he could not at the same time be the creator of all things, which however some have inferred from the verse following, tho' expressly contradicted in this verse.

16. The countenance which this passage has given to the notion of Christ being, under God, the creator of all things, has arisen from not attending to the meaning of the word which we render *creation*. In the scriptures it is often used to express a renovation, or an happy change in the constitution of things, such as was brought about by the gospel. Isaiah evidently uses the term in this sense, *behold I create all things new, behold I create Jerusalem rejoicing, &c.* This did not mean that they would be first annihilated, and then created again. Besides, the things that are here said to be created, are not the heavens and the earth, but things in heaven and things in earth, called thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, and therefore, they probably refer to that power in heaven and on earth, which was given to Christ after his resurrection, whatever that power be. For as to the nature of that power and also the mode of exercising it, we are, and no doubt wisely, left in the dark.

17. i. e. He is the chief or head of all, and by him every thing in the gospel constitution was established. The meaning of the phrase, *all things*, must be limited in the circumstances wherein it was used.

18. As this verse sums up all that the apostle says to the honour of Christ, and this implies nothing more than his being the head of the gospel dispensation, and the first who rose again to a new and immortal life, it is evidently a clue to all that had been said in the preceding verses. However figurative the language, the apostle's meaning could not be more than what is expressed in this conclusion.

Several dead persons had been raised to life, especially by our Saviour; but he was the first who was so raised as never to die again, and therefore he is called the first begotten from the dead and the prince of life.

19. Whatever powers or qualifications Christ may be possessed of, they were the gift of God. The phrase, *all fulness*, can only mean whatever could qualify him to act the part that he did, or is now doing, particularly referring to that miraculous power with which he was endued, but which was not his own, since he expressly says, that the Father within him did the works.

23. The figurative language of the apostle throws some obscurity upon his meaning, which I shall endeavour to express in the following paraphrase. Christ, in consequence of submitting to death, by which he was enabled to give the most satisfactory proof of a resurrection to immortal life, has brought about an happy union of all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, under himself as

their head: You, who were once aliens, as we may say, from the household of God, are now brought into it, even by means of his death which is so much objected to, as disgraceful to christianity, and you will become perfectly approved of God, and admitted to his favour, if you continue steadfast in the pure faith of the gospel; that gospel which is now preached through the whole Roman empire, and in the promulgation of which I myself have been a distinguished instrument.

24. The apostle in order to confirm the Colossians in the faith and hope of the gospel and in the profession of it in its purity, in opposition to the attempts of the judaizing teachers to bring them into subjection to the Mosaic ritual, goes on to speak here of the honour which he had received as the apostle of the Gentiles, and in their happiness in being called to the profession of it without any previous subjection to the law. As these judaizing teachers were Gnostics, whose system was very complex, he informs them indirectly, that the simple doctrine of christianity contains within it all the advantages which those who were so proud of their superior wisdom so much boasted of.

It is remarkable that the apostle in speaking of his own sufferings for the sake of the gospel, represents them in the same light with the sufferings of Christ himself, as both having the same general object and effect. Christ laid down his life for his friends and for the church, and the apostle also was ready to lay down his for the sake of Christ's body, which is the church. This is language which he could never have used if he had considered the death of Christ as the means

means of making atonement for the sins of men. On this idea there would be great presumption and prophaneſs in the apoſtle's language. The idea which his language naturally conveys to us is, that a great deal of ſuffering was neceſſary to eſtabliſh the chriſtian church. That of Chriſt was one part, but not the whole, that of the apoſtles and other chriſtians muſt be added to it.

29. i. e. What remained for Paul to ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt. *Le Clerc.*

27. This great myſtery, to which the apoſtle often alludes, was the call of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of Jewiſh chriſtians without circumciſion or a conformity to any other Jewiſh rites. This does not now ſtrike us as a thing of very great magnitude, but in that age it muſt have appeared of the greateſt, and accordingly we find that the minds of the zealous Jewiſh converts were never thoroughly reconciled to it. That the kingdom of Chriſt was not of this world, and that uncircumciſed Gentiles were proper ſubjects of it, were two great articles of faith which chriſtians learned after the deſcent of the ſpirit on the day of Pentecoſt, and both of them were probably inferred from appearances or facts. At leaſt we are nowhere told that they were articles of expreſs revelation, tho' the latter was probably one of the things that Paul received from Chriſt in perſon.

28. Here are two indirecť alluſions to the Gnoſtics, their boateſt wiſdom, and their perfection or thorough initiation into the true principles of Revelation of which they ſo much boateſt. In theſe, according to the

the apostle, he himself instructed every man, there being no particular class of men for whom, as they pretended, any particular instruction was reserved, and who on that account could have any pretence for despising others.

29. To communicate this christian knowledge without distinction to all the disciples, the apostle exerted himself with the most unremitting application, using all his powers as a man, and his prerogatives as an apostle of Christ for this purpose.

Ch. II. 1. From this it may be inferred with probability, but not with certainty, that Paul himself had not been either at Colosse or at Laodicea. But he had not on this account the less affection for the people of those places, or less zeal to serve them.

2. Here this great mystery, which I explained before, is called *the mystery of God*, which God is called the Father, that appellation belonging to no other person whatever, all knowledge and all blessing coming from God. It is also called *the mystery of Christ*, because it makes an important part of the gospel of Christ. This, however, is also called the gospel of God, as it came from God the fountain of light originally, and was only communicated to men by Christ as the messenger and servant of God.

3. Here the apostle alludes to the boasted wisdom of the Gnostics, intimating that in Christ, or christianity, for this is not to be understood of the person of Christ, and in its plainest principles is contained all the wisdom and knowledge of religion that is of any consequence.

sequence to man, whatever respects his duty in this life, or his hopes in another. That this was his view appears from what follows.

4. An artful address is what the apostle always ascribes to these judaizing Gnostic teachers, such as were in Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus and other places.

5. This may imply that the apostle had, by means of some supernatural impression upon his mind, a knowledge of the state of the church at Colosse, or the phrase *present in spirit* may only mean that affection and real love for them, which made the apostle consider himself as one of them, and as present with them.

7. As ye have received from me the plain doctrine of the gospel, free from the specious subtleties of your present teachers, continue in it. Here it is exceedingly evident that by Christ we are to understand the doctrine of Christ, or christianity. To receive Christ, to walk in Christ, to be rooted and built up in Christ, is here explained by the phrase *established in the faith*.

8. We see here the characters of the Gnostics and judaizing teachers united, which was afterwards ascribed to Cerinthus. The *philosophy and vain deceit* mark the Gnostics; and the *traditions of men and rudiments of the world* signify the Jewish ritual, and especially the Pharisaical additions to it, which these judaizing teachers endeavour to impose upon all christians. According to the apostle, this made a system very different from that of christianity. It was *not after Christ*.

10. The Gnostics boasted of their *pleroma*, or *fulness*; which consisted of thirty, or some other particular number of super-angelic spirits, called also principalities and powers, emanations as they supposed them to be, or derived from one another. The apostle disclaims all knowledge of this *pleroma* or *fulness*. All the knowledge that he pretended to was comprized in the simple doctrine of christianity, and none of these imaginary principalities or powers were superior to Christ.

This I take to be the whole meaning of the apostle in this passage, tho' the language of it has been applied by some to prove the proper divinity of Christ, as having in him the *fulness of the godhead bodily*. But this figurative language is likewise used by the same apostle with respect to all christians, when he prays that they may be filled with all the *fulness of God*, i. e. with divine knowledge or that which comes originally from God.

It is remarkable that one particular expression, more literally expressive of divinity than any other, is used with respect to christians, and not to Christ. It is that of Peter, when he speaks of christians as being made partakers of a divine nature. Had it so happened that this expression had been used with respect to Christ, and not to christians, it would have been thought to be unanswerably conclusive in proof of the proper divinity of Christ; for it would then no doubt have been said, what could be more clearly expressed, when he is said to have a divine nature? I mention this to shew how little stress

stress is to be laid upon mere phraseology without attending to the circumstances in which it is used.

11. As these judaizing teachers boasted of circumcision among other Jewish rites, the apostle represents all christians as in fact circumcised with Christ, tho' not with a carnal, yet with spiritual circumcision, a cutting off not real flesh but, what is of more consequence, fleshly lusts.

12. As we may be said in a figurative way of speaking to be circumcised with Christ, since his gospel enables us to lay aside the sins of the flesh, we may also be said to be buried and to rise again with him, dying unto sin, and living unto God. This is effected by faith of the operation of God, i. e. by a firm belief of christianity and of the power of God having been employed in raising Christ from the dead and establishing it.

13. Here he speaks of the great privileges of the Gentile christians, as entitled to all the distinguished blessings of the gospel, without any regard to the peculiar observances of the laws of Moses; still keeping up the allusion which is so frequent with this apostle, of dying with Christ, and rising again with him, the death being a death of sin, and the life, a life of righteousness.

According to some MSS. it may be rendered, *being dead to sin.* W.

14. The word rendered *band writing* (Χειρογραφον) signifies a bill or bond, which is in force till the obligation is discharged.

All this, it is plain, respects the Gentile christians only, with regard to whom the Jewish observances were

as if they had never existed, or had been abolished. When he says, being *against us*, and *contrary to us*, he speaks in the character of a Gentile, tho' he was a Jew. We can by no means be authorized by such casual expressions as these that the Mosaic ritual is abolished with respect to the Jews. Had this been the case, we should no doubt, have been more expressly informed concerning it. Such language as this was not likely to satisfy the Jews with respect to a system of religion which was given them, with circumstances of peculiar solemnity, by God himself, and to which they were so strongly attached. Had our Saviour, or the apostles, really thought that the Jewish law was to be abrogated, they would, no doubt, have addressed the Jews on the subject, informing them of their authority in a measure of so much consequence, and endeavouring to reconcile their minds to it. It was a doctrine which they must have known the body of the Jewish nation were ill prepared to receive.

15. In this the apostle probably alludes either to those principalities and powers, i. e. super-angelic beings of which the Gnostics made so great a boast, or to that authority, temporal or spiritual, by which their ritual observances were enforced. All power and authority, of whatever kind, was given to Christ, and he might be said to triumph over it in his cross, since in consequence of his submitting to death, God gave him that power.

Mr. W. renders, *after stripping himself*, i. e. as for the combat.

17. These

17. These were all Jewish observances, among which the sabbath is mentioned. But this does not imply that we should observe no day at all, as a season of rest from worldly business, and for the purpose of religious improvement, but only such a sabbath as the Jews, and especially the more superstitious of them, observed, with respect to which our Saviour was frequently reproving them. Such superstitious observances were probably retained by the judaizing Gnostics, and they are retained by the bulk of the Jewish nation until this day. The Gentiles also were under no obligation to observe a seventh day for the purpose of rest, as the Jews were; but as the apostles had always been used to offices of public worship one day in seven, and the propriety and use of the custom was never questioned, it cannot be supposed that they would voluntarily abandon so useful an institution, or that they would not recommend it to their disciples.

It is obvious, without any particular instruction, that a day devoted to public worship should not be a day of worldly business, or of public diversion, because tho' these things be innocent in themselves, they are of so different a nature from the proper business of the day, that they will be apt to interfere with one another. There is no reason why every thing of a cheerful and sociable nature should be excluded from the day devoted to public instruction or religious exercises, because this does not interfere with the business of the day, there being nothing gloomy or austere in true christianity. Nor is there

there any good reason why works of any particular urgency, such as cannot without great loss or inconvenience be referred to another time, and especially some kinds of harvest work, should be neglected on that day. In Judea the seasons were so regular that no real inconvenience could arise from devoting any particular day to absolute rest, but this is far from being the case in such a climate as our's, and, therefore, there is no reason why the same rule of conduct should be adopted in both. We find, however, that even the most superstitious Jews would relieve their cattle when they fell into a ditch on the sabbath day, and this is as much a work of labour as the saving a field of hay or corn from being absolutely lost, and a thing of much less value to the owner. In every thing of this nature, christianity, as far as appears, leaves every man to his own judgment and discretion, and being a matter of religion, human laws ought not to interfere with respect to it.

18. There is great difficulty in the interpretation of this passage, but as the apostle speaks of *being vainly puffed up in a fleshy mind*, he could refer to nothing but the Gnostics, who boasted of great spirituality to which their conduct did not correspond. As a great part of their doctrine consisted of opinions concerning emanations from the Supreme Being called angels, to some of which they afterwards at least ascribed the making of the world, and the giving of the law, they might at this time pay more respect to them than was proper, and this they might do from an affectation of humility, thinking not to approach the Supreme Being immedi-

immediately, but by means of these intermediate beings. Early writers say, that there long remained some kind of worship paid to Michael and other angels at Colosse and its neighbourhood.

19. For *ἁποχρησι*, some read *ἁποχρησι*, by *exorcism*.

The respect which these christians paid to angels was probably inconsistent with the supremacy of Christ in his church. He is compared to the head, and his disciples to the rest of the body, which is necessarily dependent upon the head, and receives nourishment from it till it comes to its full growth. This the apostle calls *the increase of God*, meaning probably a very great increase, which he elsewhere calls *the fulness of God*, or that happy perfect state, which the apostle Peter calls *the partaking of a divine nature*.

20. Here by *being dead with Christ*, the apostle supposes christians to be dead to every thing that is foreign to the genuine principles of christianity, among which he enumerated those observances which were imposed upon them by their judaizing Gnostic teachers.

22. *Touch not, taste not, handle not*, were the injunctions of their teachers with respect to things of a temporary and perishable nature, which is probably what is here meant by the phrase, *perish with the using*, tho' some think that, as the word signifies corruption, it is an intimation that such observances were corruptions of the genuine christian doctrine.

23. The great recommendation of the Gnostic doctrine and discipline was their teaching to exalt the

mind by the neglect or mortification of the body, which led to many practices properly called *will worship*, because not enjoined by God, but devised by man. Many such things were afterwards introduced into christianity, on principles similar to those of the Gnostics. For tho' the system in general was at length abandoned, many parts of it were, from a similar inclination and propensity, retained, and even carried farther than before. This is the case in the church of Rome, in the doctrine and discipline of which there is more of a system of *will worship* than there was among the Gnostics; and many of these are retained in the church of England, as particular days in honour of the apostles and other saints, the observance of Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas, and many other things of a different nature. With respect to all these things the best rule is to keep to the scriptures, for if once what is here called *will worship* be admitted, there is no saying where it will stop.

Ch. III. Here the apostle begins to urge upon the christians at Colosse, the observance of those moral duties which it was the great object and design of christianity to inculcate; and which it could never be improper to recommend to any person professing christianity. But there was another reason for the apostle's connecting matters of practice and speculation, as he does in this and his other epistles, the object of which is properly controversy, of which the generality of readers may not be aware, which is, that it was a connection which was not known in other religions, and but little attended to by the Gnostics. They were a set of specu-

speculating persons, who contented themselves with considering christianity as a new branch of sublime knowledge, which they connected as well as they could with the tenets which they had adopted before ; and tho' some of their maxims led to severity and mortification, it was not uniformly or consistently the case, and they sometimes even furnished pretences for sensual indulgences to those who were naturally addicted to them. On this account the apostle perpetually insisted upon the obligation that all christians were under to an uniform propriety of conduct, or holiness of heart and life ; and especially a faithful discharge of all the relative duties of life, such as those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, magistrates and subjects, &c. If our religion does not make us exemplary in these respects, it is of no value to us, either with respect to this life, or that which is to come.

1. This is the figurative allusion so frequent with this apostle, of our being dead with Christ and risen again with him. If we be conformed to him in these respects, let us likewise be so as to his ascension into heaven, by setting our affections upon heavenly objects, and that glory which he enjoys at the right hand of the Father who is heaven.

4. Here the apostle passes from the figurative sense of the term life to its natural sense, but happily enough. Having been dead to Christ by dying unto sin, we now live with him, by living unto God in the practice of virtue. This new life is hid with Christ in God, being kept up by the principles of christianity, which

were taught by Christ in the name of God. But our natural lives are also said to be hid with Christ, for when we shall be dead, Christ may be said to have the custody of our lives; and when he comes again he will bring them with him by restoring to life all his faithful disciples; these who may be said to have put their lives into his hands yielding obedience to his precepts here, with a full persuasion that he will raise them to immortal life hereafter. This, however, clearly implies that christians are not to be in a state of happiness immediately after death, for in that state their lives are said to be hid with Christ, and they are not to be brought forth till his return; so that when he shall appear, but not before, shall his followers appear with him in glory.

6. The principles of Gnosticism led to the mortification of the body in order to purify and elevate the faculties of the mind: a principle which many have carried so far as to suppose, that the more pain they gave themselves in this life, the more happiness they secured to themselves in another: Paul, alluding probably to this principle of the Gnostics, gives it a very happy turn, recommending not the mortification of the body or flesh as such, but fleshly lusts. These it was the object of christianity to mortify, but not the body itself. These alone are the cause of God's displeasure, and to reclaim men from these was the great object of God in all his dispensations to mankind, by the prophets in the Old Testament and by Jesus Christ, and the apostles in the New.

8. *Blasphemy* signifies reproachful language in general, tho' it is most shocking and impious when it respects

pects God. Obscene conversation as well as obscene practices, were very frequent in the Gentile world; as may be perceived by many passages in the epistles of Paul. Christianity has introduced a decency into conversation, that was unknown to the world before; and they must be very inattentive to the principles of it, who take any liberties in this way by the most distant indecent allusions; for every thing of this kind christianity strictly forbids.

9. The strict obligation of truth was particularly attended to by the heathen world, and even by heathen philosophers, but insincerity of every kind is strictly forbidden by christianity; truth and veracity being the great bonds of human society, and the only ground of confidence between man and man.

10. This strict truth and veracity the apostle represents as the character of that new life to which we are raised by the gospel, which flows from real knowledge, not such as was boasted of by the Gnostics, to whose principles he here again alludes, as appears by the next verse, in which he represents christianity as levelling all the distinctions of men, teaching us to consider all men as alike our brethren, and the objects of our friendly regard.

11. It is not that these distinctions of men will not remain under christianity, but they will be no obstruction to brotherly love and affection; Christ, which here means christianity, being in our idea every thing, and that which recommends every person to us. The distinction, therefore, of Jews and Gentiles may continue to the end of time, the former being bound to particu-

lar observances which do not affect the latter, and yet this be no hindrance to the proper unity of the christian church, consisting of both alike, and both being equally entitled to the favour of God, with respect to another world.

12. Here begins an enumeration of virtues peculiarly christian, and they are such as manifest the truest nobleness and greatness of mind, the most perfect good will to all, and a desire to promote the happiness of others, by passing by every thing that can obstruct the effects of it.

13. Here also by *Christ* we are, as in many other places, to understand christianity, in which there is provision for the pardon of all sins. The great being against whom sinners offend, is God; and therefore he only is properly said to forgive, and he makes his solemn declaration of forgiveness to all the world by the gospel, exalting Christ as a prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins; that is, to proclaim the doctrine of remission of sin upon repentance. In the parallel passage in the epistle to the Ephesians it is, *as God in Christ freely forgives you*. The idea is the same, but differently and more intelligibly expressed.

14. Brotherly love is elsewhere said to be the fulfilling of the law, all the social duties being comprized in this precept, *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. He alludes to the girdle, which bound their loose garments to the body. So charity, or brotherly love; is the completion of the christian character, the whole law being comprized in it.

15. The

15. The *peace of God*, here means a regard to the favour of God, who alone can give peace or happiness. This peace should preside in our hearts as the judge in the Grecian games, for such is the meaning of the word in the original. To this peace of God, this happiness, all christians are called, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, since they make but one body in Christ. This peace ought to be the continual object of our joy and gratitude.

16. Here is a fine intimation in what manner christians should have their thoughts and their leisure time occupied. The mind being enlightened with true wisdom, here opposed to that of the Gnostics, should be always imparting that wisdom to others, by improving conversation, and especially of a cheerful cast. The apostle also recommends frequent singing of psalms, meaning probably those of David, and likewise other pious compositions of a similar nature, called hymns and spiritual songs. The apostle James also says, is any merry or cheerful, let him sing psalms. This was very much the practice of christians in early times, both in public worship and in private, and to persons who have any feelings of the powers of music, singing is a greater help to fervour and devotion than any other use of language.

17. i. e. Let your whole minds be occupied by christian sentiments. Let your great object be to recommend the principles of your religion to others, by acting upon them yourselves, and always consider yourselves as under the greatest obligation to God for this most invaluable gift.

Here, as upon all occasions, the term God is applied to the Father only, exclusively of Christ and all other beings. It is God who sends Christ as his messenger and servant, to instruct and to bless the world; and to that great being, the source of all good, should our gratitude be primarily directed. Of him, through him, and to him are all things. We are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

18. The apostle now proceeds to mention the particular moral duties of christians, especially the relative ones, as those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, many of which were explained away by those who perverted christianity in that early age. Many also, as I have observed, seemed to consider christianity as a speculative system, and did not connect with it the observance of the moral duties of life. After this the apostle closes his epistle with salutations to and from particular persons: The great use of this circumstance in proving the genuineness of his epistles, I have more than once explained.

25. The judaizing teachers taught the unlawfulness of servitude. On the contrary the apostle shows that christianity makes no change whatever in the civil conditions of men, but enforces the duties peculiar to each condition, by considering that the object of that duty is not only the person immediately affected by it, but God, who will reward men for their obedience, and punish them for their disobedience. With respect to God, and Christ who will judge the world, all persons are equal, none are held in an higher esteem than another, but will be respected according to their behaviour

our in their proper station, whatever that was, master or servant.

Ch. IV. 2. The duty of prayer is constantly urged upon christians, and to have God continually in our thoughts, in which state of mind it will be impossible not to address ourselves to him in thanksgiving and petition, is the great object of all the means of religion. When we have attained to this habitual devotion, so that, as the Psalmist says, *God shall be in all our thoughts*, we shall be prepared for all the events of life, and secure against all temptations to sin; and without this habitual devotion, or constant regard to the presence and government of God in all our actions, all the prescribed means of religion signify nothing.

4. Prayer for others you see is as proper as prayer for ourselves; and both are equally natural, and indeed unavoidable on the idea of our loving others as we do ourselves, which is the great christian precept. Earnestly wishing the happiness of others, will necessarily draw after it the practice of praying for it. It is very observable that all the apostle wished for from the prayers of his friends, was, his having a more open field for the preaching of the gospel. This appears to have been his only great object. To life or death he seems to have been indifferent. Could such a man as this, whose epistles are so much the language of nature, be an impostor, carrying on some artful design, the object of which must have been his interest or his fame in this world? They know nothing of human nature, and the natural expressions of human sentiments, who can suspect any such thing.

5. Paul

5. Paul was no wild enthusiast, inattentive to times and persons, but conducted himself and advised others to conduct themselves with prudence and discretion; especially to give no occasion to unbelievers to think unfavourably of their religious principles; and also not to expose themselves to unnecessary dangers, which may be the meaning of the phrase *redeeming the time*, securing as much of it as possible for all the useful purposes of life. But we are not to value even life itself, when the cause of truth requires the sacrifice of it.

6. This is an admonition to avoid whatever is offensive to others, and to study whatever is civil and agreeable in conversation; and also that address which will qualify a man to defend his principles whether they be attacked by argument or ridicule. Good sense is never employed to more advantage than in this way. And to persons who see much of the world there is continual occasion for it.

7. Tychicus appears to have carried the letter from Paul to the Ephesians, so that it is probable that they were both sent at the same time.

9. We shall see more of this Onesimus in the epistle to Philemon.

10. It appears by this affectionate mention which Paul makes of Mark, that he had seen reason to be entirely reconciled to him, notwithstanding the offence he had taken on account of his leaving him and Barnabas in his first progress to preach the gospel.

11. From this it is probable that all the persons
whole

whose names precede this were Jews, and that they who follow were Gentiles.

14. Luke being mentioned after those of the circumcision, makes it probable that he was a Gentile. Demas, who together with Titus and Crescens was mentioned by Paul in a former epistle from Rome, as having forsaken him, because he loved the present world, had now it seems returned to him again ; so that all that we have to infer from his having loved the present world, was probably nothing more than his fleeing from persecution, which was not criminal in itself, tho' it might be unseasonable and appear to be unkind with respect to the apostle, who, being a prisoner, could not fly.

15. Laodicea was in the neighbourhood of Colosse and also of Ephesus : and as none of the ancients speak of the epistle of Paul directed to the church of Laodicea, it is probable that the epistle to the Ephesians had been directed to be sent to Laodicea ; and as Colosse was nearer to Laodicea than it was to Ephesus, it was natural for them to receive it from thence. These two epistles are very similar to each other, so that the one may serve to explain the other.

17. This seems to reflect some degree of censure on Archippus, who was probably one of the elders of the church of Colosse.

18. I have observed that Paul seldom wrote much with his own hand, which was probably owing to his not writing the Greek character well. However, to authenticate his epistles, he signed them himself, and usually concluded them with some such sentence as
this

this, expressing his affectionate regard for those to whom he wrote.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO

P H I L E M O N.

PHILEMON was a citizen of Colosse, whose slave Onesimus had ran away from him, and had probably robbed him. It happened, however, that Onesimus coming to Rome while Paul was a prisoner there, and hearing him preach, he became a convert to christianity, and made himself useful to Paul. Being, no doubt, convinced by the apostle of the wrong he had done to his master, he was prevailed upon to return to him, and to make his reception the easier, Paul gave him this epistle, which shews at the same time his just sense of moral obligation, and also his refined address.

Tho' there is not much of what may be called apostolical dignity in this epistle, no article of christian doctrine being discussed in it, yet it has great propriety and beauty as a private letter, and it clearly shews the apostle to have been no wild enthusiast, but one who was well acquainted with mankind, and with human nature, and who governed himself by that knowledge.

It

It therefore shews us that inattention to these things is no recommendation of a christian. At the same time that we should be *harmless as doves*, it becomes us to be *wise as serpents*.

We also learn from this epistle some lessons of useful morality, such as the duty of servants to their masters, notwithstanding their being upon a level with them as fellow christians, and the duties of masters to faithful servants, especially when they are at the same time their fellow christians.

This epistle was probably sent at the same time with that to the Colossians by Onesimus.

1. From Philemon, being called the fellow labourer of Paul, some have concluded that he was the bishop of the church at Colosse. But it is evident that all the epistles of Paul were written prior to the appointment of bishops, as the term was afterwards applied, there being no mention in his writings of any single person as *president* or *overseer* of any particular church. The custom then was to appoint a number of persons, with the title of presbyters, or elders, to superintend the affairs of a church; and it was not till some time after this that it was thought proper to distinguish one of these by the title of bishop, or rather to appropriate to one that title which had before been given to all the elders promiscuously.

2. Archippus was evidently one of the elders of the church of Colosse, since in the epistle to that church he was admonished to attend to his ministry.

Philemon had probably a large family consisting of many slaves, most of whom were christians as well as their
their

their master. I must again observe that in those times all persons in the condition of slaves were by no means wholly illiterate, capable of nothing but mere labour. Many of them had better educations than their masters, and were persons in whom the greatest confidence was reposed, being intrusted with the chief management of very important affairs. Onesimus was probably a person of some knowledge and capacity, or Paul would hardly have spoken of him as one who had been so useful to him at Rome.

3. I hardly need to observe, what I have done on so many former occasions, only that it is a matter of particular consequence, that no person could use this language so constantly as Paul does, and have any idea of Christ being God. They are by him evidently distinguished from each other, as beings of very different classes.

4. Here prayer and thanksgiving are addressed to God and not to Christ, tho' it is in a matter relating to the christian church; which clearly proves that the apostle did not consider Christ as a proper object of prayer, but God only.

6. This sentence is rather embarrassed. The meaning is, that as Philemon had been distinguished by his christian zeal, the apostle wished that he might continue to be so, and that its effects might be so conspicuous in every christian duty, as that all persons might see and admire it:

7. These praises of Philemon, as I doubt not they were just, very properly introduced the request which the apostle had to make to him.

8. Observe here the address of the apostle. He might have used his apostolical authority, and have commanded Philemon, but he chose to ask what he wanted as a favour, alledging the love that he bore to him, his own advanced age, and his being a prisoner, as if to excite his affection and even compassion. Paul could not at this time have been much more than fifty four or fifty five years old, but through his incessant labours he might be infirm, and conclude that he was drawing near to the close of his life.

10. In order to enforce his request in favour of Onesimus, he calls him his own son, being converted by him while he was a prisoner, and from this circumstance more dear to him.

11. Being now a christian, and having a full sense of his duty, he would be of much more value than he had been, and on that account was entitled to a more favourable reception. In this the apostle probably alluded to the meaning of the word *Onesimus*, which signifies useful. He had probably been a slave, born and educated in his master's house, and had this name given to him for the sake of the good omen, which was very customary in those times.

12. He represents Onesimus as the same with himself, in order to raise Philemon's esteem for him.

14. Paul here considers it, and justly, as the duty of all christians to assist those who are in any difficulty, and especially when suffering for the sake of the gospel. Paul therefore had a kind of a right to retain Onesimus to serve him in the place of his master.

15 Here

15. Here the phrase *for ever* may only mean during life, or it may refer to the satisfaction that Philemon would have in his slave, as a christian brother, to all eternity.

16. i. e. Both as a slave and as a christian.

18. It is not certain that Onesimus had robbed his master of any thing. All that Paul alludes to might be the loss of his service for so long a time as he had been absent from him.

19. I need not point out all the strokes of fine address in this epistle. You may see them in every sentence, nothing being omitted that was like to work upon an ingenuous mind.

22. Paul, tho' still a prisoner, had, as is evident, a certain prospect of his release at the time of his writing this epistle, which was in the close of the year 63 after Christ.

24. These are all the same persons who are mentioned at the close of the epistle to the Colossians, as sending salutations to the whole of that church, as they now do to Philemon in particular.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE

H E B R E W S.

IT is not absolutely certain who was the writer of this epistle, and it was some centuries before it was universally received as one of the canonical books of the New Testament, and on this account it is not considered as of the same authority with the rest. That it was not written by Paul some argue from it's not bearing his name; from it's not beginning as all his other epistles do; from the stile in which it is written, being, as all the ancients acknowledge, considerably different from that of his other epistles; and from some of the arguments being manifestly weak and inconclusive. But notwithstanding this, I am, upon the whole, inclined to think that this epistle was written by Paul, after his release from his imprisonment at Rome, A. D. 63, and before he left Italy.

Why Paul should not prefix his name to this epistle, I own, I do not see. His name was certainly offensive to the Jewish christians in general, but the whole tenor of it shews that it was not intended to be concealed, since the writer mentions his design of visiting the persons to whom it is addressed. Perhaps it was not originally intended to be an epistle, to be sent to any particular persons, but a kind of treatise for

more general use, and on this account Paul might not begin it in his usual manner. The mention that is made of Timothy in this epistle is such as might be expected from Paul, and from no other person, and the salutations in the close are exactly like those of Paul.

As to the reasoning in this epistle it is much of a piece with that of the epistle to the Romans and the Galatians, upon the same subjects; and we are not to expect perfect correctness in any thing of this nature. The Jews, having no other books, were always meditating on their scriptures, which led them to apply passages in them to all occasions, proper and improper, and to draw from them arguments which will not always bear a strict examination. This was perfectly natural in their circumstances, and if we had found the case to be otherwise, we should have wanted a valuable argument of the genuineness of these writings, as not suiting the men or the times.

The great object of this epistle is so much the same with that of several others of Paul's, as almost proves him to have been the writer. It is to lessen the excessive regard which the Jewish christians of that age entertained for the institutions of Moses, which led them to endeavour to impose the observance of them upon the Gentile converts. With this view the writer of this epistle endeavours to shew the superiority of Christ to Moses, and to those angels by whom God spake to the patriarchs and prophets, and the superiority of the christian dispensation in a variety of respects to that of the Jews, shewing that whatever was found in the in-
stitutions

stitutions of Moses, there was something of the same nature, and, superior in kind, in the gospel. More, particularly as the Jews boasted much of their priesthood, their sacrifices, and their temple, the writer of this epistle finds an highpriest, a sacrifice, and a temple, in the christian scheme. But in this it may be easily supposed there is room for much imagination in fancying resemblances where the appearances are very slight, so that much stress is not to be laid on arguments of this kind. This mode of reasoning, however, was usual with the Jews in general, and was by no means peculiar to the apostle, or to christians.

There are in this epistle a few allusions to the doctrine of the Gnostics, to which the judaizing teachers of that age were much inclined.

Ch. I. 2. It is evident from this verse only, that the notion which has so long prevailed among christians that Christ was the person by whom God spake to the patriarchs, and who appeared to Moses in the bush, has no foundation in the scriptures, for here the contrary is expressly declared. It is here said to have been by angels only that God spake to the Fathers, and that he did not speak by his son till the last days, meaning evidently the times of Christ.

With this has also been connected the opinion that it was by Christ that God made the world or the whole system of creation. But this also is as destitute of foundation in the scriptures as the other. For tho' it seemed to be asserted in this place, it must be observed that the word here rendered *worlds*, properly signifies periods or ages, and not the visible system of things, such as the earth,

or the sun moon and stars. It ought therefore to have been rendered *by whom he constituted the ages*, whatever be meant by that phrase. The meaning of it probably is, that the future state of things, or the state of things in future periods of time, will be regulated with a view to Christ, or christianity; Christ being now, i.e. since his resurrection, appointed heir or Lord of all things, having all power committed unto him so that the future state of all men will be, in some sense, at his disposal.

3. Christ being here said to bear the likeness of God, clearly implies there is no more than a likeness, and that he is not himself God. He is also said to be in the form of God, but so also was Adam said to have been, and so may any man become in a still higher sense by a communication of divine powers, imparted or withheld at the pleasure of God. Such phrases, therefore, are far from implying that Christ was any thing more than what God was pleased to make him. When all things are here said to be *upheld by the word of his power*, it is meant of the power of God and not of Christ. Besides the phrase, *all things*, does not in this place mean the system of nature, or the whole creation, but rather the new creation, as the change brought about by christians is often called. The whole of this may be said to depend upon Christ, he being under God the founder of this new constitution.

With a view to a subject on which the writer of this epistle enlarges much afterwards, he here ascribes to the death of Christ, the purging or cleansing of sin, thus comparing it to a sacrifice of sin, christianity being intended

intended to put away sin by reforming the world. This, therefore, is only said by way of figure, and by no means implies that Christ in his death, is to be considered as a proper sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. Nothing more is meant by the writer than what he elsewhere expresses when he says, that *by the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honour.*

4. All the arguments that follow, which are intended to prove that Christ was no angel, will also prove that he had no nature superior to that of man, but was only a man exalted above angels. All these arguments depend upon such applications of passages in scripture to Christ, as were originally applied to other purposes, and as they are capable of any other similar application, it is evident that, strictly speaking, nothing can be inferred from them concerning any other persons, than those to whom they originally related.

5. In these two passages David or Solomon was certainly intended.

6. If this be a reference to the ninety seventh psalm, it is spoken of God only.

7. This should be rendered, *who maketh the winds his angels, and flames of fire his messengers*, implying that any thing may be called an angel which God employs to execute his purposes.

9. This, which is borrowed from the forty sixth psalm, is spoken of Solomon, and should have been rendered, *God is thy throne, or the foundation of thy power.* As the writer speaks of Christ being exalted above his fellows, he must mean his fellow men, or fellow prophets, and therefore he certainly never consider-

ed him, as being by nature above the rank of other men. For he expressly distinguishes him from angels, and consequently from any being of an angelic nature, and by this term we are led to understand all created beings superior to man.

12. This is a description of the power of God, in changing the whole system of nature, while he himself remains the same, and it may be introduced to shew that the power of Christ is as permanent as that of God, who gave it to him.

13. This is a quotation from the second psalm, which relates to David or Solomon.

14. i. e. Angels are subservient even to christians, and much more so to Christ their head.

THE PARAPHRASE.

God, who at several times and in various manners, formerly spake to the ancestors of the Jewish nation by the prophets, has, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed Lord of all the new system, or constitution of things, established in the gospel, and by whom he has arranged all the future periods of it; who shining with his Father's brightness, or bearing a near resemblance to him, and exercising that power over all nature which he conferred upon him, having submitted to death, by which he may be said, in allusion to the Jewish sacrifices, to have offered himself for our sins, is now set down at the right hand of God,

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That Christ is superior to angels may be inferred from his being distinguished by higher appellations. Did God ever address the angels as he does his Son, in a passage in the book of Psalms, which we may apply to Christ. *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* In another passage he says, *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.* Also, when after the resurrection God brings his Son again to the world, as his empire, in which he is appointed to reign, we may apply to him this passage in the psalms, *that all the angels of God be subject to him.*

Concerning angels God speaks in a very different manner. For in one passage he says, *he maketh the winds his angels, and flames of fire his ministers.* But to the Son of God, we may apply that passage in the psalms, in which the writer speaking of Solomon says, *God is thy throne, or the foundation of thy power, for ever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions.*

The perpetual duration of the kingdom of Christ is alluded to in this passage of the psalms, in which is described the unchangeable power of God, who gave him his authority. *Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest: and they shall all wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* To which also of the angels did God say, what

was originally spoken of David, but which we may apply to Christ, *sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool*. Angels are only ministering spirits subservient to christians, and much more so Christ their Lord and master.

Ch. II. The writer of this epistle continues to shew the superiority of the gospel to the law of Moses, from the superior dignity of the person by whom it was promulgated; the law having been given by the ministration of angels, and the gospel by Jesus Christ, who for the suffering of death was exalted above angels. For it is evident in this chapter, that the idea of Christ being properly a man, is as clearly attended to by this writer, as his superiority to angels by the appointment of God.

1. Or, as it is rendered in the margin, *lest we should run out like leaky vessels*, for the idea of the writer is not that of holding thing in the hand and letting go their hold.

4. In these respects, however, the two dispensations agree, both coming from God, and appearing to do so by such miracles accompanying the promulgation of them as could have no other author besides the author of nature itself, the laws of which were suspended or altered by them. The writer, however, seems to intimate that the miracles under the law were wrought indeed by angels, under the divine direction, but not so immediately by God himself, as in the christian miracles, since, with respect to them, no being above the rank of man, is said to have been employed; so that the power must have been immediately that of God himself,

self, as it is here expressed, according to his own will, or express volition, which confirms what our Saviour himself said, that the Father who was in him did the works, and that the words which he spake were not his own, but the Father's who sent him.

5. *The world to come* means in general a future state, but here it signifies the empire or dominion that is given to Christ, commencing in some measure at his resurrection, for then Christ may be said to be brought into his world, or rather his empire, or state of dominion and power, tho' his kingdom does not properly take place till his second coming to raise the dead and judge the world. At present, according to his own language, *he is gone to receive a kingdom*, and he will return to exercise it when he shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. This power, which, however, is not confined to Christ, but is to be enjoyed by his apostles and his followers in general, is not promised to angels, and therefore, tho' their nature be superior to that of man, yet in this respect they are inferior to Christ. Paul says that so far are angels from being the judges of men, that the saints shall judge even angels.

8. The argument by which the writer of this epistle attempts to prove the superiority of Christ to angels, is, that to him all things are said to be put in subjection, including that dominion which will hereafter be exercised of Christ, and that nothing of that kind is ever said of angels. But the proof of this is only from a passage in the eighth Psalm, in which dominion is promised to man and to the son of man. But the domini-

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on there spoken of is only over animals and the inferior creation in general, which were originally made subject to man, as we read in the account of the creation, to which the Psalmist alludes. This is allowed by almost all commentators, and it is a very clear instance of the very loose manner in which the Jews of that age applied passages of scripture even in serious argumentation; and it shews how little stress is to be laid upon such arguments. For certainly it cannot follow that because man in general, or the son of man is superior to the brute creation, and, therefore, lord of this world, that therefore Christ as the son of man, is lord of the future world. In things of this nature, as I have frequently observed, we, who have the scriptures of the Old Testament before us, must read and judge for ourselves, as the apostles did,

9. i. e. A man, answering to the description of man given by the Psalmist in the passage quoted by the writer of this epistle.

This complete dominion the writer observes is not yet given to Christ, but we see some earnest of it in the state of glory and honour to which he was raised by his resurrection from the dead, after those sufferings by which he became qualified for it.

The phrase, *for every man*, does not signify, in the stead of every man, but only on the behalf of man, to which both the death of Christ, and every thing that he did, was subservient.

10. It was a wise measure in the supreme ruler of all things, in order to raise men to a state of immortal glory

glory and happiness, to prepare him who was to take the lead in this scheme, and who was the first to be advanced to this high dignity, by a course of suffering; this being the natural means of producing in him that perfection of character which is requisite for such an exalted station.

The writer of this epistle having here called Christ *the captain of our salvation*, or the leader of our salvation, he who stands foremost in the honourable list, now shews that there was the greatest propriety in his being of the same rank with those at whose head he was placed, as a general with respect to an army; and I would observe that all that follows in this chapter has no other object, and he could never have written it with any other idea than that of Christ being as much a man as any of his followers who bore the christian name.

12. This is a quotation from the Psalms, in which the writer, speaking in his own name, calls his fellow worshippers brethren.

13. i. e. As other mortal men do who have no ground of support or confidence in themselves. Such expressions as these are frequent in the Psalms. This is an expression of Isaiah, who is speaking of his own children, which the writer of this epistle applies to Christ and his disciples.

15. As those who are to be converted to christianity are men, it was proper that Christ should be a man also, in order that, dying like other men, he might put an end to the power of death and all evil. The principle,

or

or cause to which all evil is to be referred, is, as I have frequently observed, called in the scriptures the Devil or Satan, that is, something adverse or hostile to man, as the word signifies, which is personified, as sin and death likewise are.

18. The writer of this epistle represents Christ as being a man subject to death, in order to deliver other men from the fear of death, which fear of death, as an excellent critic, Mr. John Palmer, has lately observed, does not lay hold of angels, but only on the seed of Abraham, that is, men. He therefore must be of the proper seed of Abraham, or a man like other descendants from Abraham. As the writer of this epistle expressly says that it behoved Christ to be in all things like unto his brethren, and especially in being subject to death like them, it is impossible that he should have any other idea than that of his being a mere man, subject to death, as his brethren were.

It was, according to the idea of this writer, farther requisite that Christ should be a mere man, in order that he might act the part of a proper highpriest with respect to man, the highpriest among the Jews being as much a man as other Jews were. Christ therefore resembles the Jewish highpriests, who by sacrifice made atonement for the sins of the people, that knowing the power of temptation to which men are subject, and which men could only know by experience, he might feel for them and relieve them, not in a miraculous way, but by providing such supports and consolations as were proper for the nature and conditions of men.

That.

That these allusions to the Jewish sacrifices, which are so frequent in this epistle, are not to be considered as any more than figures of speech, and that we are by no means authorized to infer from them, that the anger of God was appeased by the death of Christ, I have had frequent occasions to observe and explain.

Ch. III. The writer of this epistle still continues to shew the superiority of the gospel to the law, by shewing the superiority of Christ to Moses, and consequently by the greater danger of disregarding the gospel.

1. Christ is here called *the apostle of our profession*, that is, the messenger whom God sent on this commission, not evidently implying, that he was subservient to the will of him that sent him, or his proper servant, as other prophets were.

2. The word which is here properly translated *appointed*, generally signifies *made* or *created*, which shews with what latitude words are used by the sacred writers, and that we are by no means authorized to infer, that when the term *creation* is made use of, a proper creation is intended, when it often signifies the appointment of something created before, or a renovation or new state of things, such as was produced by the promulgation of the gospel.

6. The argument by which Christ is here proved to be superior to Moses is, that Moses was no more than a servant in the house or family of God, whereas Christ is a Son, who has the care and conduct of an house under God his Father. For the word which is here rendered, *builds*, does not mean creates or establishes, but only orders or governs. The inferior governor is Christ,
but

but the supreme governor is God, the house is the christian church of which Christ is the head, and Moses was a servant with respect to it, because his dispensation preceded it, and prepared the way for it.

7. What was written by David the author of the psalm, is here ascribed to the spirit of God, perhaps as the author of all good, but very probably the author considered the psalm as properly dictated by the spirit of God. There is nothing, however, in the book of Psalms that requires any thing more than the natural powers of man, directed by a pious disposition. A deep sense of the universal presence and government of God, is conspicuous in all the psalms, but this with the natural faculties of man, seems to be abundantly sufficient for such compositions as they are. The passage here quoted is part of the ninety fifth psalm, in which the writer exhorts his readers to take warning by the example of their ancestors, that they might not provoke God, as those had done, and suffer as they did in consequence of it; but might not any good man of plain understanding have said the same.

9. *Proved me*, means tried me, or exercised my patience by their continual provocations.

11. i. e. The land of Canaan which was the resting place of the children of Israel after their long wandering in the wilderness.

13. This is the proper use of the examples of obstinacy and incredulity, which we meet with in the Old Testament, and in former times in general. The cause of this obstinacy is always some evil passion, which we secretly

secretly indulge. If the gospel be true, i. e. if it be founded upon sufficient evidence, it must be some wrong bias that prevents any person from seeing that evidence; but this may be owing to very different causes, and consequently may have very different degrees of criminality.

14. i. e. We share with Christ himself in the blessings of christianity, he is the elder brother and the heir. But we are the younger brethren and joint heirs with him.

16. It may be rendered, *but who of them that heard did provoke*, were they not all that came out of Egypt? Did not their unbelief and obstinacy affect the great body of the people of Israel, all except Caleb and Joshua? We ought therefore, to be more upon our guard lest a disposition so very prevalent, and which formerly affected such great numbers, should influence us also.

Ch. IV. 2. Here the word *gospel*, means in general good news or the promises of God to the obedient. The Jews had their peculiar promises, and christians have theirs also.

3. i. e. There is a *rest*, spoken of in the account of the creation itself, and wherever we meet with any account of a state of rest, i. e. of repose and enjoyment, the same rules will apply to it. If it be promised to men, a scene of action always precedes it, as it did with respect to God himself.

9. Instead of *Jesus* it should have been rendered *Joshua*, which is the same in Hebrew with Jesus in Greek. It is evident that all the *rest* which is mentioned or referred to by the Psalmist, is the very *rest* in the

the land of Canaan to which Joshua introduced the children of Israel ; and tho' it be true that there does remain a *rest for the people of God* after the trials of this life, there is no great force in this particular argument to prove it. If there be any truth in the gospel history, Christ came to preach the doctrine of a future state of retribution, or happiness to the righteous, and misery to the wicked, and besides proving his divine mission by miracles he died and rose again in proof of it. On this solid foundation does this great article of our faith and hope rest.

12. Here we have a good reason for taking warning by the example of the Israelites, since our conduct, and even our thoughts, cannot escape the notice of the divine being. The *dividing of the joints and marrow*, seems to allude to the dividing into its several parts the carcases of the beasts that were sacrificed. But the word, or power, of God can penetrate farther than the knife of the priest, even to the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That part of the epistle which we now enter upon is not particularly edifying to us. In it the writer enlarges on the superiority of the gospel to the law of Moses, with respect to every circumstance of which the Jews, who were attached to it, made their boast. Did the Jews pride themselves in their temple, their altar, their sacrifices, and their highpriest, the writer of this epistle finds in the christian system a temple, an altar, a sacrifice, and an highpriest, superior to their's, so that the former were only types of what followed. But as I have frequently observed, tho' arguments of this kind were

were calculated to make an impression upon Jews, they are not only of no use to us, who have no Jewish prejudices to remove, but if we be not upon our guard, they may mislead us, by teaching us to look for something more than a figurative resemblance in them. Thus prayer and alms are called sacrifices, but we should greatly perplex ourselves if we should imagine that they are true and proper sacrifices, and into a much greater mistake shall we be led if we imagine that Christ was a real priest, or his death a real sacrifice, and that this sacrifice was an atonement to the anger of God, which if it had not fallen upon the innocent must have fallen upon the guilty. For this will contradict the whole tenor of scripture, which uniformly represents God as our merciful Father, as essentially, and of himself, merciful and gracious, and forgiving sins freely, upon repentance alone, and instead of receiving a price for our redemption from his wrath, as himself giving a price for us, when we were as it were estranged from him and lost to him.

Christ is also called our passover, a thing quite foreign to a sacrifice for sin. But all these views of the death of Christ are only comparisons, which illustrate it in certain respects, tho' the resemblance by no means holds in others. Having, therefore, frequently expressed these sentiments and given my reasons for them more at large, I shall content myself with explaining the views of the writer in these figurative representations, without any regard to the justness of them, till we come to the excellent conclusion of the whole in the tenth chapter, in which, and to the end of the epistle,

the writer exhorts to a steadfast faith in christianity, and a patient waiting for the promises of it, in the persecution to which christians were then exposed.

14. The writer having exhorted to watchfulness and perseverance, from the example of the ancient Israelites; in order that we may attain to that *rest* in heaven, of which the rest that they obtained under Josua was a type, adds an argument for it, from the superiority of Jesus considered as a *highpriest* to the highpriests under the law.

16. As a reason why we should put greater confidence in our highpriest, he observes that he is one who will make every reasonable allowance for our infirmities, having been himself subject to the same, and felt the force of them, tho' he rose above them; not having yielded to the temptations to which he was exposed.

It is evident from this passage, as well as many others in this epistle, that the writer considered Christ as being a mere man, liable to infirmities and temptations as other men are, and therefore that his example is a ground of encouragement to us, who are constituted as he was, and placed in similar circumstances.

Ch. V. 3. In this respect he shews that the Hebrew highpriest resembled the christian, since his offering for himself, as well as for the people, shewed that he was liable to transgress as well as they. The sacrifices that he offered being for *sin*.

5. Another point of resemblance between the Hebrew and the christian highpriests is, that neither of them were self appointed, but received their appointment from God. Of the appointment of Aaron to his office

office we have a particular account in the books of Moses. That Jesus had a similar appointment this writer argues from two passages in the Psalms, one of them the second, in which it is said, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; and the other from Ps. cx. 11. where it is said, *Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec*. Both these passages probably relate to David, but the Jews, according to their usual mode of interpreting scripture, understood them of the Messiah. In the former of the two passages nothing is said of any priesthood, but it was supposed to have the same import with the latter, in which priesthood is expressly mentioned.

9. In this verse and those preceding it, the writer reverts to the character of Jesus as a priest, subject to infirmity as we are, and depending upon God as it becomes us to do. In the seventh verse he alludes to his agony in the garden, which was a clear proof of human infirmity, when for his *piety*, or resignation to the will of God (for so the phrase is to be understood) he was relieved by an angel being sent to strengthen him. For tho', as he adds, he was in the highest favour with God, as his Son, he was not exempt from that discipline which is necessary to the perfection of the human character.

10. Reverting to his argument for the priesthood of Jesus from his being said to be a priest after the order of Melchizedec, he takes occasion to observe that there were several things relating to this subject which they were not then prepared to understand.

14. The persons to whom this epistle was addressed were Jews, who boasted of their superior knowledge; and yet he observes that they were far from being those proficienta that they imagined themselves to be. For that they rather resembled young children who required to be fed with milk, and not men who could digest stronger food.

Ch. VI. 1. The articles of christian doctrine in which those to whom the author of this epistle writes had been instructed, and which he therefore presumed they must understand, he here briefly enumerates; and indeed they are such things as every christian must have known and believed, viz. the necessity of repentance and faith in Christ, the use of baptism, the gift of the holy spirit by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, and the doctrine of a resurrection and future judgment. These he, therefore, passes over, and informs them that he shall proceed to subjects of greater difficulty, as he does at the close of this chapter. But previous to this he reverts to what he had justly laid peculiar stress upon before, viz. the importance of perseverance in order to attain to that rest in heaven which is promised to christians.

5. This argument for perseverance is drawn from the consideration of the desperate condition of those who do not persevere, but fall off from the profession of christianity, and the practice of the duties which it enjoins. It is, indeed, morally impossible that they should be brought to repentance, since in order to this nothing can be urged upon them that they are not already acquainted with, and have resisted the force of. They must

must be as much hardened as those who were concerned in the crucifixion of Jesus ; and if they really renounce the profession of christianity, they must consider him as an impostor, and therefore cannot be expostulated with on christian principles.

7. To receive a blessing is equivalent to bearing an ample produce. For in this case we see in the book of Ruth (ch. ii. 4) the reapers blessed the owner of the field, and he them.

8. He illustrates his argument by observing that if a piece of ground produce nothing but thorns and briars, notwithstanding it receives the same advantage of rain, &c. with that which yields the most valuable products, it must be given up as of no value, nor deserving of culture.

9. This, however, he expresses his persuasion was not the case of those to whom he writes.

10. They had, indeed, given evidence of their being possessed of the most substantial christian virtues, in ministering to the necessities of others ; and for this they would, no doubt, receive an abundant reward.

15. As a motive to persevere in their duty, notwithstanding any hardships to which they might be exposed, he reminds them of the case of Abraham, and others, who, after a due exercise of their faith and patience, had received a just reward.

19. That they might have the greater assurance of receiving the just reward of their faith and patience, he observes that God has promised it by an oath, as well as by his word, two things that cannot be changed.

Our hope may, therefore, be compared to an anchor fixed in the very place where God himself resides, viz. the holy of holies itself.

Ch. VII. Having mentioned the holy of holies into which the Jewish highpriest entered once a year, he returns to the argument concerning Jesus, as the highpriest whom he had said to have been made such after the order of Melchizedec; and thence he is led to treat of this subject, as one of the higher things which he had before said was hard to be understood. But in his observations on this subject we find more of imagination than judgment. It proceeds, however, on such an application of the scriptures as the Jews were accustomed to, and laid much stress upon; and therefore would have weight with those to whom he wrote, as I doubt not they had with himself. But this should not prevent our judging for ourselves, and rejecting whatever does not appear to be sufficiently well founded. And there is nothing in all the writings of this apostle that is more open to objection than his reasoning concerning Melchizedec.

1. It does not appear from the account of Melchizedec in the book of Genesis, that he was more of a priest than was Abraham. He was, according to that account, which is all that this writer could know concerning him, a petty prince; and in these times all princes were likewise priests of their several tribes or nations, and occasionally offered sacrifices, as did Abraham. Indeed the same word (כֹּהֵן) is used indifferently for a priest or prince.

2. 1ho^s

2. Tho' Abraham gave Melchizedec a tenth of the spoils which he had recovered from the kings whom he had defeated, it does not appear that he gave it with any religious view, or as any thing that was due to him. It was perhaps to indemnify him for what he might have suffered from the incursions of those kings; Salem was nothing more than the name of the city of which Melchizedec was king, and tho' this name signifies *righteousness*, or *peace*, it had nothing to do with the character of the prince who reigned there. A king of Salem, tho' denoting righteousness and peace, might have been a wicked and turbulent prince, troublesome to all his neighbours; and yet this writer seems to lay some stress on this circumstance of the name of his city.

3. Because the descent of Melchizedec is not mentioned by Moses, the writer of this epistle seems to have considered him as having had neither father nor mother; and because he is said to be *a priest forever*, as if he had never died. That something is meant by this writer more than that we are ignorant of the genealogy or age of Melchizedec, is evident from his mentioning these circumstances as an *encomium*, and from his adding that in these respects he resembles the son of God, the Messiah; for that, like him, he was a perpetual highpriest.

6. The superiority of Melchizedec to Abraham is here inferred from his taking tythes of him; and that he must have had a divine authority for this, as the Levites had to take their tythes from those who like

themselves were descended from Abraham. But Melchizedec, he observes, had no natural connection with Abraham, and could not derive any right or title from him, and therefore must have had it from God himself.

7 Another argument for the superiority of Melchizedec to Abraham, is that *he blessed him*, which, according to this writer implies superiority. But tho' Pharaoh was blessed by Jacob, the superiority of the patriarch consisted in nothing besides his greater age.

8. The priests among the Israelites were mortal, but Melchizedec, it is here intimated, was immortal. Had the meaning only been that we have no account of his age or death; it would have been no argument of superiority at all.

10. Even the priests of the Hebrews might be said to have paid tithes to Melchizedec, since Abraham their ancestor did.

11. That the priesthood of Jesus is superior to that of Aaron, this writer argues from his being said to be a priest according to the order of Melchizedec, while the priesthood of Aaron subsisted, which would have been sufficient for all the purposes of priesthood, if it had been complete.

12. From this change in the priesthood, viz. from that of Aaron to another resembling that of Melchizedec, this writer infers that there must have been a change in the law from which the family of Aaron derived their priesthood. According to Moses the priests must be the natural descendants of Aaron, and of no other

other, and Aaron was descended from Levi ; but Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, which implies a quite different constitution.

17. But the most material difference between these two priesthoods, this writer intimates was that the constitution from which that of Aaron was derived was *temporary*, whereas that of Melchizedec was eternal. He also says that the law by which the descendants of Aaron were priests was *carnal*, implying, tho' not expressly saying, that the other was spiritual.

19. From this supposed change in the constitution, by which the priesthood of Aaron was superseded, and another resembling that of Melchizedec introduced, the writer argues the imperfection of the former, and the superiority of the latter ; which he says is more effectual, as a means of communication between God and men, which is the object of every priesthood.

22. As a farther argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus above that of Aaron, he observes that it was established in a more solemn manner, viz. by an *oath*, the psalmist having said the lord *swore* that he was a priest after the order of Melchizedec. But except this circumstance of the oath, nothing could exceed the solemnity with which Aaron and his descendants were appointed to be priests to the Hebrew nation.

25. The superiority of the priesthood of Jesus appears from the continuance of it in *his own person*, while that of Aaron was in succession, each individual priest being mortal.

28 Where-

28. Whereas the sacrifices of the Hebrew priests were repeated every day, besides being made on account of their own sins, as well as those of the people, one sacrifice of Jesus, viz. that of himself, was sufficient. And he being without sin, this sacrifice could not respect himself, but the people only.

We have now been directed to a variety of circumstances as implying the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus to that of Aaron; but it is only by way of *figure* that he can be said to be a priest at all; being, in reality no more a priest than he was a door, or vine, or any thing else to which he was occasionally compared. Besides the passage in the cxth. Psalm on which the whole of this argument hinges (*for in no other passage is the Messiah said to be a priest*) is, as I have shewn in my notes on that psalm, some very early corruption of the original text, and which we have now no means of restoring. The Chaldee paraphrase gives a sense very different from that of the LXX, which the apostle here adopts.

Having enlarged on the argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus above that of Aaron, from its being said to resemble that of Melchizedec, the writer proceeds to other considerations, at the same time repeating, and enlarging upon those that he had mentioned before.

Ch. VIII. 1. The superior excellence of the priesthood of Jesus, is here argued from his being now at the right hand of God, in the real heavens, whereas Aaron officiated in a tabernacle on the earth.

2. The tabernacle in which Aaron officiated was erected by men, but that in which Jesus officiates, being in the heavens, must be the work of God.

4. The sacerdotal offices of Jesus must be discharged in heaven, for had he been a priest while he was on the earth, his priesthood would have interfered with that of the descendants of Aaron. But it may be replied, that the principal act of his priesthood, his offering the sacrifice of himself, in his death, was performed while he was on earth.

5. Every thing relating to the tabernacle, and the furniture of it, was only a shadow, or copy, of something of a superior kind, which was shewn to Moses in the mount, and in the idea of this writer this superior sanctuary is that in which Jesus now officiates. But it is evident from the account of Moses that what he was shewn on the mount was nothing more than a pattern of what was to be made by Bezaleel and Aholiab, lest he should have mistaken a mere verbal description.

13. Here the writer advances a different argument for the insufficiency of the covenant, or constitution, by which Aaron and his descendants were made priests, It is said by the prophets who foretold the future happy state of the Israelitish nation, that God would make a *new covenant* with them. But all that was meant by this was that God would make a farther promise in their favour, and that the terms of it would not be violated by them, as those of his original promise to Abraham had been. For the people not having fulfilled their part of the covenant, the Divine Being had withheld the blessings which he had promised on their perform-

performances of it ; but that hereafter the covenant, or law, being as it were written in their hearts, they would no more forget or depart from it, but would strictly and inviolably adhere to it ; in consequence of which the covenant would be renewed, or confirmed. It would be like beginning again, after an unsuccessful attempt at something which had not succeeded.

But that in this new and future state of things the forms of the ancient law will be resumed, and continue to the end of time, is evident from the very particular description of the temple and the service of it in the book of Ezekiel. And that there will be no change of the priesthood is evident from its being there declared to be in the family of Zadoc, while the temporal sovereignty will be in the family of David ; so that both the king and the priest will be according to the ancient constitution, and the business of sacrificing will be conducted by them as it had been before.

Ch. IX. The writer here continues his comparison of the constitution of Moses, which he calls *of this world*, or temporary, with the future and spiritual one, of which he says the preceding was only the pattern, or an introduction to it, which was the christian dispensation.

1. Here the writer recites the various particulars of which the earthly sanctuary and its services consisted.

Mr. Wakefield has the *sacred furniture*, instead of a *worldly sanctuary*.

4. By the *censer*, on which incense was burned, must be meant the *golden altar of incense*. For other-
wise

wife there is no mention of it at all. But this was not in the holy of holies, which was the place of the ark, but in the holy place, near to the partition between them.

8. Tho' the place in which was the ark is called the *holy of holies*, yet this writer says this was only a type of one that was still more holy.

9. The services of the Hebrew sanctuary were all of an external nature, mere bodily services, and had nothing to do with the mind.

11. Jesus, being the highpriest of the new dispensation, officiates not in the tabernacle or temple that was made by men, but in a spiritual one in the heavens.

12. Nor did his sacrifice consist of such animals as were slaughtered for this purpose in the earthly sanctuary, but of himself. And having offered his own blood, by which a real and not an emblematical atonement was made, he entered into the true holy of holies, which is in heaven:

14. The better reading is through the *holy spirit*, not *eternal spirit*.

The blood of the sacrifices under the law, and also the ashes of the red heifer, could only affect the *body*, but that of Jesus purifies even the *mind*, operating in a spiritual manner.

15. Jesus is, therefore, the highpriest or the mediator between God and man, according to a new and spiritual dispensation, by means of which the conscience is purified, and atonement made for such transgressions.

as the former dispensation did not provide for ; in consequence of which we who have the benefit of it obtain not a temporal advantage, which was all that was promised for the observance of the institutions of Moses, but an eternal one.

16. This new dispensation, being of the nature of a testament, or last will, implies the death of the testator, as does every other testament, being of no force during the life of the testator. This, indeed, was signified under the old dispensation, in which much use was made of blood in the death of the victims.

19. It appears from *Exod. xxiv, 5—6*, that Moses did not sprinkle the blood upon the book, but only on the people.

22. According to the Hebrew ritual, atonement was generally, but not always, made with blood.

23. For this service, which was only a type of a future one, the blood of animals was sufficient ; but the services of the future and spiritual dispensation require a sacrifice of a more valuable kind.

24. It is not the earthly temple in which Jesus officiates, but a spiritual one, which is not upon the earth, but in heaven.

26. The superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus is also evident from this circumstance, that those of the temporal sanctuary required to be repeated, but that of the spiritual one did not ; Jesus dying only once being sufficient.

28. As it is sufficient for men in general to die once, before the general judgment, so Jesus died only once

to

to atone for the sins of all his followers, who expect his second coming, not for the purpose of offering himself any more, but in a state of glory, which he will share with all his disciples.

Ch. X. 3. The institutions of Moses being only a sketch*, and not a perfect picture, of the dispensation to which it was preparatory, could not make those who conformed to them perfect. And that they were insufficient for this purpose is evident, as was observed before, from their being required to be repeated, the high-priest going into the holy of holies every year.

4. Nor is it possible, in the nature of things, that the blood of any brute animals can cleanse the conscience from moral impurity.

9. The insufficiency of the legal sacrifices is even asserted by the psalmist, when he says (Ps. XLVI 7.) that God did not require them, and for this reason the Messiah was to be a man, with a body and blood, by which means a sacrifice of greater value might be made. And immediately after the above assertion he expresses his readiness to *do the will of God*, by submitting to death. This, says the writer, is an evident intimation that the dispensation which required the sacrifice of bulls and goats, &c. was to be set aside, and another more perfect one introduced in its place.

In

* This is an allusion to the practice of painters who first draw a mere *outline* or a *sketch*, before they complete the *picture*, so that in the idea of this writer the institutions of Moses were not even a complete picture, but only a sketch, of the gospel dispensation.

In this argument the writer follows the reading of the LXX. which is very different from that of the present Hebrew. For there, according to our translation, it is, *my ears hast thou opened*, and not *a body hast thou prepared for me* : where the phrase opening, or perforating, the ear, probably alludes to the custom of boring the ear of a slave, by sticking a nail through it to the door post, as a symbol of his perpetual attachment to his master. The Chaldee and the Syriac versions agree with the Hebrew, and the Arabic and Ethiopic follow the LXX, from which they were probably made.

10. By this sacrifice of Jesus we obtain a complete sanctification.

14. Thus he repeats, and sums up, his last argument. The sacrifices under the law were repeated daily, but that of Jesus did not require to be repeated ; and after his death he was advanced to the right hand of God, where he remains till all his enemies be subdued.

18. Here he repeats another of his former arguments, from the mention that is made by the prophets of a *new covenant*, which is to be in the hearts of the worshippers, and by complying with which all sins are for ever atoned for, and done away.

19. Having shewn the superiority of the dispensation of the gospel to that of the law, he grounds upon it an argument for the persevering conformity to the precepts of it ; reminding those to whom he writes that the great object of the whole scheme was moral purity.

22. i. e. Being possessed of privileges similar to those of the Jews, and superior to them, having access to the
favour

favour of God by christianity alone, let us cherish a steadfast faith in it, and have our minds purified from all evil affections, as the bodies of Jews are purified by their sacrifices and washing with water. In this there is an evident allusion to the solemn washings which prepared the Jews for the temple service.

25. The Gnostics, against whose principles some parts of this epistle are directed, considering christianity as a speculative system, laid no stress on public worship, or any positive institutions of religion. Many of them had no public prayers, or even the administration of baptism or the Lord's supper. They had no regular officiating ministers, or places of public worship, and by this means they more easily escaped persecution. But the apostle insists upon a very different system, urging the importance of public assemblies of christians, which answer several very excellent purposes: One is that of an open profession of christianity, to which all christians are bound; another is that of public instruction, and a third of no less consequence is, that of forming christians into a regular body, connecting them together, and thus bringing them under an obligation to mutual exhortation and assistance in every thing relating to the common cause of christianity, which in time of persecution especially, is of the greatest use. This is clearly expressed in the passage which I have now read.

The day approaching, probably means the great day of judgment, which is always represented as being at hand, at whatever distance it may really be, because it

is, as certain as if it were near. In this place, however, it may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was then near at hand, and the signs of its approach were sufficiently apparent.

27. i. e. If we apostatize from christianity after having made profession of it, we can have no hope of the divine favour, this being the last dispensation of God to man, expressed in a figurative way of *there being no more sacrifice for sin.*

29. Any presumptuous transgression of the law of Moses was punishable with death, that is, death temporal; but the sanctions of christianity respecting a future world, the contemptuous rejection of it must draw after it the judgments of God in a future state.

The spirit of grace means the gospel. W.

To do despite to the spirit of grace, is probably the same thing that in the gospel is called *the sin against the holy spirit*, which probably consists in ascribing the miracles of Christ and those of the apostles to magic, the operation of demons, or some evil principle. While this was the case there remained no possible means of conviction, for all the attestation of any divine mission, is the performance of such works as God only, the author of nature, can perform.

31. Here the writer observes that God will certainly execute the sanctions of his own laws, and if God will judge his people, avenging their wrongs, he will certainly avenge those which may be said to be done to himself.

34. This is a circumstance which I think makes it probable that the apostle Paul was the writer of this
epistle

epistle. He had been in bonds or imprisonment two years at Jerusalem.

Some MSS. have, *Ye have had compassion on those that were in bonds*, not alluding to himself in particular.

37. i. e. Christ who is to come again will certainly come at the appointed time. The phrase *he that will come*, or *he that is to come*, seems to have been synonymous to the Messiah with the Jews. It is probably borrowed from Malachi iii, 1, *behold he shall come saith the Lord of hosts*. This appears from the message of John to Jesus; *art thou he that shall come*, i. e. art thou the Messiah.

39. The writer here quotes the prophet Habakkuk for the great principle of virtue, which consists in the firm belief in the promises of God, the same which so greatly distinguished Abraham, and of which we have a fuller account in the next chapter.

Ch. XI. The writer of this epistle having spoken of the excellence of faith, here proceeds to give a more particular account of it, with a variety of examples from the Old Testament. From all which we clearly perceive, that in his idea, christian faith is a firm belief in the divine veracity, and undoubting assurance that whatever God has promised by Christ, or any other prophet, will certainly come to pass, and this is the foundation of all practical religion. If we had no faith in the divine promises or threatnings, we could have no motive of obedience derived from religion, and might as well reject even the belief of a God. For the only real use

of the belief of a God is derived from the persuasion that he governs the world in righteousness, that he will reward virtue and punish vice.

I would observe that the rhetorical turn of this chapter, which very much resembles that of Paul's description of his sufferings, and of the properties of charity in his acknowledged epistles, is an argument of his being the writer of this.

1. What we render *substance* should be *confident expectation*, and the word that we render *evidence* may be rendered *conviction*, that conviction which arises from the fullest evidence or proof of a thing; so that faith is nothing more than a full persuasion or belief of what we do not ourselves see, whether it be past or future, and is opposed to the evidence of sense. What we ourselves see we may be said to know in the first instance, what we do not see we cannot know, but may be said to believe, being on good grounds persuaded that it has been, or that it will come to pass. You see then that there is nothing mysterious or difficult to be understood in the scripture doctrine of faith, whatever some enthusiastic persons may have advanced concerning it.

2. By faith, similar to that of the gospel, those who are most celebrated for their virtue in the Old Testament, and who were distinguished and rewarded by God for it, were enabled to perform those things which are recorded of them.

3. The word here rendered *worlds*, does not mean the material worlds but only ages, or periods of time. By faith we believe that these periods were fixed, and
confe-

consequently that future events were appointed by God long before they took place; so that the things which we see, or look towards, do not consist of things that now appear. This, therefore, is only another and fuller manner of expressing what he had said more concisely before, viz. that faith, is the persuasion we have concerning things which do not appear, being as yet future.

4. We are but imperfectly informed concerning the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and the apostles could know no more concerning it than we do from the books of Moses, but both the apostles and we may safely infer, that since the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, and that of Cain was not, the former was performed with a disposition of mind more pleasing to God than the latter; and every good disposition of mind that we exercise in the worship of God, is comprized in and depends upon faith, or a firm belief of the being and providence of God. It is probable that God signified his acceptance of Abel's sacrifice by fire from heaven consuming it.

By a person's speaking when he is dead, we are to understand his example being useful after he is dead. Thus many who are now dead, may yet be said to speak.

6. We see, that the writer of this epistle knew nothing particular concerning the faith of Enoch, any more than that of Abel, except what he inferred of his being accepted of God; and that Enoch was so accepted appeared by the most unquestionable evidence, his being translated to heaven without dying.

It were much to be wished, but it is to no purpose, that we knew something more of what preceded the translation of Enoch. So great an event and the first of its kind, had no doubt some very important cause. It is possible, but this we can only conjecture, that Enoch might have been authorized to teach the doctrine of a future life, and that as a proof of the reality of this future state, he might be removed into it without dying, since his translation would be a miracle, better adapted to confirm his doctrine, than any other that should have had no relation to such a state. The fuller proof of a resurrection from the dead was reserved for the dispensation of the gospel.

The great doctrine of a future life, which is the object of the whole scheme of revelation, must have been communicated to mankind in some period prior to the law of Moses, since it was known to all the Jews in the time of our Saviour, and we cannot fix upon any period in the Jewish history in which we can suppose it to have been communicated, without our being informed concerning the circumstances of so great a revelation. There are traces also of this doctrine being known to the Chaldeans and other heathens. I think it most probable, therefore, that it was communicated to mankind in the very earliest ages, perhaps to Adam himself, and that it was farther confirmed by Enoch. As Elijah, who was translated, had been distinguished as a prophet, it is probable also on this account, that Enoch had been a similar character. But as I have observed, we can only form conjectures concerning any thing so remote as this.

In

In Jude we read that Enoch prophesied concerning the day of judgement, (v. 14) and Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning these things, saying, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all; so that upon some foundation or other, concerning which we are intirely in the dark, it was supposed that Enoch was authorized by God to teach this great doctrine. I would farther observe, that the translation of Enoch and Elijah was not calculated to give mankind any idea of a state of happiness without the body, but the contrary.

7. i. e. Became intitled to the character of a righteous man, through a principle of faith in God, firmly believing his threatenings and his promises.

10. i. e. The possession of the land of Canaan which was promised by God to his posterity.

16. It is plain that all the country that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were encouraged to look for, was an earthly, and not a heavenly one, but it might be called heavenly on account of its excellence, or the writer overlooking their regard to this particular promise of God, in consequence of which he was in a peculiar sense their God, might consider their personal virtue as good men, and expectation of an happy immortality, which, it cannot be doubted, those Pa'riarchs were, tho' nothing is particularly said of their virtue having this object, there being no occasion to treat of that in their history. For the object of Moses, was to speak of them only as the founders of the Israelitish nation, and of their firm faith in the promises of God, which

respected the nation at the head of which they were placed. The writings of Moses relate to the Israelitish nation as such, and he was himself leading them to the country which had been promised to their ancestors, and on this account this particular promise, and what relates to it make so great a figure in his writings. But christianity respects all mankind alike, and therefore the great doctrine of a resurrection, which concerns all mankind, is the great object of our faith and hope. To this we should ever direct our conduct, considering ourselves as only pilgrims and strangers here below.

19. It is no wonder that this instance of the faith of Abraham should be so much noticed. It was indeed a very extraordinary thing. That promise of God, which his faith respected, was that not only his posterity should be a great and flourishing nation, but that this nation should descend from his son Isaac. In Isaac shall thy seed be called. If Isaac, therefore had been sacrificed, Abraham must have believed that God would raise him from the dead, and if he had not had the firmest faith in the power of God to do this, he would not have shewn his faith by his readiness to sacrifice his son, a thing to which he must have had the greatest possible reluctance, and he did it without any reluctance or hesitation that appears in the history. After such an act of obedience subsequent to that of abandoning his country and going he knew not whether, on the simple command of God, it is no wonder that he obtained the title of the father of the faithful, or the pattern of all believers.

20. is a. Having the firmest faith that the predictions which he was inspired to deliver would have their full accomplishment.

21. In the Old Testament no mention is made of the *staff*, but of the *bed* on which Jacob rested. But the same word in the Hebrew, or with such a variation in pronouncing it as we are now ignorant of, signified both.

22. We may remember that Joseph ordered that he should not be buried in Egypt, but that he should be duly embalmed there, in the manner practiced in that country, by which bodies were reduced to a state like wood, and rendered as incorruptible. Such bodies are now called mummies, and they are all brought from Egypt. Joseph gave these orders that in this state he might be carried along with them when they left that country, and nothing could express a stronger faith in the divine promise that the land of Canaan was designated for the Israelites while they were detained in Egypt. It is probable, however, that the people in general lost all hope of deliverance when they found themselves reduced to a state of abject servitude, and the land of Canaan possessed by great and warlike nations.

23. It does not appear that it was through any proper act of faith in God that the parents of Moses used their best endeavours to save the life of their child; for we know of no promise of God for his deliverance, and without this there can be no foundation for faith. I do not therefore see that this was a proper example like the others mentioned by this writer.

24. If

24. If Moses firmly believed the future destination of the people to which he belonged, as in consequence of having an Hebrew woman (his own mother) for a nurse, as he probably did, it was properly an act of faith in God that led him to prefer his connection with that people, to any advantage that he might have enjoyed as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.

26. By the reproach of Christ, we can only understand a reproach similar to that which was incurred by Christ. The recompence of reward could only be his prospect of deliverance, and of his settlement, or rather that of his posterity, in the land of Canaan.

27. This is perhaps ascribing too much to the faith of Moses. He evidently fled for fear of his life in consequence of an action for which, if he had been discovered, he would certainly have been put to death. It is probable, indeed, that he was a pious man, and consequently had respect to him who is invisible, to the presence and providence of God; but at that time he does not appear to have had any intercourse with God, and therefore he had no promise respecting himself as a foundation for any particular faith in God.

29. In all these transactions, which were of a most wonderful nature, no doubt Moses and all pious Israelites were actuated by a proper faith in God, by whose hand they were immediately conducted, and which had been visibly displayed in the punishment of their oppressors and their deliverance from their power. If the state of the Israelites in Egypt be considered when they

they were numerous indeed, but unarmed and defenceless, their masters powerful and warlike, themselves without any friend from without, and the country for which they looked possessed by nations perhaps more warlike than the Egyptians themselves, with a wilderness to travel through, in which such a multitude could not naturally have subsisted a single week ; if it be considered that notwithstanding these circumstances, and all the opposition which the Egyptians could give to the Israelites, they nevertheless actually did leave Egypt, passed forty years in that wilderness, and then took possession of the land of Canaan, it must be evident that there must have been some miracle in the case, for naturally such a thing could not have taken place.

The history of Moses makes all these transactions perfectly credible, but every other hypothesis must be utterly inadequate to account for the known facts. It is impossible to read the history of Moses without perceiving the most undeniable traces of it's being written at the time of the transactions. It is in some places almost a journal of the proceedings of every day, with such a particular mention of persons and places as are never found except in authentic histories. The books of Moses were also received as genuine and faithful narratives of events by the whole Jewish nation, who, in all their apostacies from the worship of God, never entertained a doubt concerning the truth of their contents. Such a belief in the authenticity of these books, and of the truth of their contents, as the Jews in all ages have main-

maintained, could only have been produced by the most satisfactory evidence. An attempt to impose upon a nation the belief of any thing similar to this, would be treated with ridicule, and could never succeed in any degree. What should we say of any book, pretended to be authentic, which should inform us that our ancestors came from France, that they walked through the sea from Calais to Dover, and that afterwards the river Thames was in like manner divided, and that they walked through it on dry ground. There is no period of time in which such an history could be written and gain any credit.

30. God having assured the Israelites that the walls of Jericho would fall without any efforts of their's, they believed that assurance, and the event corresponded to the prediction; not that their faith was in any proper sense instrumental to the throwing down of the walls.

31. She had a firm persuasion that the Israelites would get possession of the land of Canaan, and therefore, she took the best method that she could to secure herself in case of that event. Had she not had this persuasion or belief, she would not have concealed the spies but have given them up.

32. We are not to suppose that all these persons were distinguished for their moral virtue, and on that account peculiar favourites of heaven, tho' some of them were so. But they were all distinguished by their faith, or firm belief in the promises of God, and acting in consequence of that belief, which was to undertake what they never would have undertaken without a firm
per-

persuasion of God being with them: The characters of Sampson and Jephtha, in a moral light do not seem to have anything to recommend them, but they adhered to the worship of the true God, and exerted themselves in favour of their country against its enemies, with a full persuasion that God was with them. There seems to have been but little pure virtue or piety in the character of Sampson, but his last prayer shews how sensible he was that his extraordinary strength came from God, and that as he had both given it, and taken it away, he could restore it to him again.

32. *Wrought righteousness*, this is a phrase of very uncertain meaning, but probably refers to high acts of obedience to God in general, which are peculiarly termed *righteousness*. Thus it is said, that Abraham shewed his obedience to God, and it was imputed to him for *righteousness*.

33. *Stopping the mouth of lions*. This no doubt refers chiefly to the history of Daniel, over whom the hungry lions had no power.

34. *Quenched the violence of fire*, This alludes to the history of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were thrown into the fiery furnace without receiving any hurt.

35. *Received their dead raised to life again*. This was the case of two women in the history of Elijah and Elisha.

That they might obtain a better resurrection, this is probably an allusion to the history of the Maccabees, in whose time there was a grievous persecution of the Israelites by Antiochus king of Syria, who introduced
the

the worship of the heathen gods into Jerusalem and the temple, and who inflicted the greatest tortures on those who would not conform to that worship. In one of the books of Maccabees, there is a particular relation of a woman and her seven sons who were then put to death, and who are represented as bearing extreme torture, with singular fortitude, expressing their firm faith in a happy resurrection. Whether that particular book be very ancient or not, the story must have been a traditional one among the Jews, and well known at the time of writing this epistle.

A better resurrection, means a resurrection to a better life.

37. Which of the ancient prophets or men of distinguished probity it does not appear, nor do we learn in the Old Testament that any of them were *sawn asunder*. But there was a tradition among the Jews that this was the fate of Isaiah under Manasseh. Some suppose the word to signify *being torn in pieces*. But the ancients had many horrid methods of putting persons to death by torture, and one of them was by fastening a man between two boards, and sawing him and them at the same time.

It seems extraordinary that so feeble an expression as being *tempted* should be mentioned in connection with the horrid punishments of *being stoned and sawn asunder*, and *slain with the sword*. On this account some suppose that the Greek was originally somewhat different to what it is now, and with a little variation it will signify, *they were burned in the fire*. Others have

have suggested different readings, expressive of other modes of torture.

40 i. e. All these worthies distinguished by their zeal for God and their faith in his promises.

Ch. XII. The apostle continues his practical exhortations peculiarly adapted to a state of persecution, with many allusions to the Grecian games.

1. Since we are surrounded by so many witnesses of our behaviour, let us exert ourselves to gain their approbation; laying aside whatever might incumber us in our race. This may allude to birds flying as it were in clouds over our heads.

2. As we profess to be the disciples and followers of Christ, let us consider what he endured, in order to obtain the rewards that were set before him. The phrase *author and finisher of our faith*, is better rendered by Mr. Wakefield, *the guide and complete pattern of this faith*.

4. All the persecution that christians had hitherto met with had been from the Jews; and they had very seldom the power of punishing with death, and about this time, when they were on the point of coming to an open rupture with the Romans, they were too much occupied with their own affairs to give much attention to the christians.

The allusion seems to be to the combats of gladiators, who fought at first with weapons that could not give mortal wounds, but which were afterwards changed for a sword. The antagonist was *sin*.

8. The education of bastards was, of course much neglected, and no proper discipline administered to them,

11. The

11. The peaceable fruits, means the happy fruits, peace being generally used to denote happiness.

13. Remove from the path every thing that may obstruct you and others in the christian race, lest those who are weak or lame, should be induced to leave it; but rather let them be healed and strengthened, so as to be enabled to proceed along with you. Here is a change of the metaphor from running in a race, at least against competitors, to walking in a path with others who are to keep us company.

15. That we should attend to others as well as to ourselves. With a very slight alteration, it would be *lest any root bitter as gall spring up*. It signifies in Deut. xx. 18. to which this is an allusion, is said to be an infectious kind of plant, which taints other vegetables that are near it. *Doddridge*.

Instead of *springing up*, it should probably be as *Mr. W.* conjectures, *as gall*. A slight alteration will make it so, and then it will agree with Deut. xxix, 18. *W.*

17. Who sought the blessing with tears.

18. Here the apostle observes that christians have more encouragement to virtue than Jews. The dispensation we are under is not terrifying, but inviting; as different from that of Moses, as Mount Sion, which was in Jerusalem, was from Mount Sinai, from which the law was given in thunder and lightning. He also supposes the christians to be the inhabitants of a Jerusalem; but to distinguish it from that which was in Judea, he calls it a *heavenly Jerusalem*, still using strong figures of speech. As mount Sinai was not to be approached when God spake from it, I should suspect the
negative

negative particle was dropped by some early transcriber. If the present reading be right, all that can be said in defence of it, is that, tho' the mountain might be touched, it was extremely hazardous.

21. It does not appear from the narrative that Moses was at all afraid, but the people were, Ex. xx, 18, *And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not, for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*

23. By this is not to be understood the state of good men in a future world; for to this they were not arrived, but to that greater perfection of character, and the superior privileges which the gospel enables them to attain. Agreeably to this, our Saviour speaking of John the Baptist, whom he represented as superior to any of the preceding prophets, says that *the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he.*

24. The blood of Abel called for vengeance, but that of Jesus, which God is represented as giving in order to rescue men from a state of sin and wickedness, speaks forgiveness and peace.

25. In the giving of the gospel, as well as of the law, the speaker was, in fact, upon the earth; and in both cases the speakers came from heaven, or were sent of God. But in the giving of the law God is represented as speaking from Mount Sinai; whereas in the

gospel the voices that were heard in attestation of the mission of Jesus were from the region of the air ; and therefore to appearance, more directly from heaven. Or the phrase may only be intended to denote the superiority of the mission of Jesus ; which was what John meant when he represented himself as speaking from the earth, and Jesus from heaven.

26. When God spake from Mount Sinai, that mountain, and probably all the neighbouring places, shook ; but the prophet Haggai speaks of another shaking, which had not then taken place, Hag. ii. 6. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations ; and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.* As this refers to some event that was to take place after the Jewish dispensation, the apostle applies it to the times of the gospel. It is, however, almost certain, that it relates to those great convulsions of states and kingdoms which are to precede the setting up of the proper kingdom of Christ ; convulsions which seem to be taking place at this very time ; and to which we ought, therefore, to be particularly attentive.

28. Having quoted a passage of scripture in which mention is made of a *shaking*, the apostle is led to extend the figure, and to consider some things as liable to be thrown down by shaking, while others were not. Such is the kingdom of Christ, which *shall not be removed*, according to Daniel, *but remain forever.*

Ch.

Ch. XIII. 1. The apostle concludes his epistle with a number of miscellaneous, but most affectionate and earnest exhortations, some of which respect the judaizing teachers and Gnostics,

2. Alluding to the case of Abraham.

4. Here is an allusion to the Gnostics, who considered marriage as a state of pollution, unworthy of those who aimed at perfection.

8. By *Jesus Christ* in this place, as in some others, is meant not the person of Christ, but *his gospel*, which the apostle says is the same, and does not vary with the opinions of men; alluding to the novel doctrine of the Gnostics, mentioned in the next verse. Jesus himself used the same figurative language, when he said that he *himself*, nay his *flesh and blood*, were to be eaten, in order to obtain everlasting life, meaning, no doubt, that his doctrine was to be received and practiced.

9. The doctrines of the Gnostics were not immediately introduced into the christian churches, and therefore would appear *new* and strange; and as the first Gnostics were Jews, they taught conformity to the Jewish law, and the distinction of meats there prescribed; the uselessness of which observances the apostle shews in the character and conduct of these Jews, who were the most strict observers of their ritual.

16. Here the apostle reverts to the object of a great part of his epistle, which was to shew those who made a boast of the Jewish ritual, that there are in christianity things that tho' by a figure of speech, they may bear the same name, are of a much superior kind. Thus in christi-

amity he found a *priest* and a *sacrifice*, and here he finds an *altar*, to which the unconverted Jew had no access.

12. As the Jewish sin offerings were burned without the camp in the wilderness, and afterwards without the gates of Jerusalem, so Jesus, the christian sin offering, suffered without the gates of that city:

13. In imitation of him, let us not hesitate to suffer as he did, however reproachful as well as painful, such sufferings may be.

14. All that we can suffer here is of little consequence life itself being short and uncertain, not to be compared with the glorious and happy state which is destined for those who continue patient in well doing, and, if occasion be, in suffering also.

15. Here again the apostle adopts the Jewish phraseology. Let us bring our offerings, not the produce of our fields, or our flocks, but of our lips, in praise and thanksgiving to God.

16. That is *reputable*, so as not to disgrace our profession in the eyes of strangers.

19. The apostle was still a prisoner, tho' expecting to be released.

20. We see an allusion to the Jewish ritual in the whole of this epistle, with notices of the superiority of the christian system. Thus the covenant of God with christians is called *everlasting*, in contradistinction to that made by Moses, which he represents as introductory to it. Mr. W. renders it, *that shepherd of the sheep, become great by the blood of the everlasting covenant*.

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The exaltation of Christ is always ascribed to the merit of his sufferings.

23. The manner in which the writer of this epistle here mentions Timothy, makes it almost certain that it was Paul who wrote it. We know of no person, a prisoner at Rome at this time, who can be supposed to have written in this manner.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO

J A M E S.

THE seven epistles, which, in the usual order of the books of the New Testament, follow those of Paul, soon obtained the title of *Catholic*, or *general epistles*, on account of most of them being directed not to particular persons, or particular churches, but to christians in general.

The first in order was written by James, commonly called *the brother of Jesus*, probably a near relation, and the same who is called the *son of Alphaeus*, or *Cleopas*, which is the same name differently written. He was one of the apostles, presided in the church at Jerusalem, and was a person of the greatest respectability; being highly esteemed even by the unbelieving Jews. He soon obtained the appellation of *the just*, on account

of his exemplary piety and virtue. He lived till the year A. D. 64, very near to the breaking out of the Jewish war, and suffered martyrdom in a tumult in or near the temple. This epistle was probably written not long before his death; and it is addressed to the Jews in general, believers or unbelievers; and the object of it is to enforce the practice of moral duties.

Ch. I. 1. Tho' the ten tribes, which formed the kingdom of Israel, never returned from their captivity in a body, and the greater part of them being dispersed in Media and other countries, conformed to the religions of them, many individuals were mixed with the Jews, both in Judea and other places, and the Jews never lost sight of their relation to them.

3. This Le Clerc renders, *your trials have produced the patience of faith.*

4. The hatred which the unbelieving Jews bore to the christians was of the most violent kind; and all the persecution to which the latter were exposed till after this time, was from them. This part of the epistle, therefore, is addressed to the believing Jews, exhorting them to patience. His chief argument is, that no character of great excellence was ever formed but in adversity. This situation enforces humility, piety, and sympathy, as well as exercises fortitude, all which are necessary ingredients in true greatness.

5. In time of persecution many persons would be at a loss to act, or whether to remain in their situation, or remove to other places, and in certain circumstances it might be peculiarly difficult to determine. It is in this case, probably, to which the apostle refers; and in that

that age it was not unreasonable to expect direction from God in a supernatural way. In any case habitual devotion, referring ourselves to the providence of God, in the practice of what appears to us to be our duty, affords inexpressible relief to the mind, and a powerful support under trials, tho' there be nothing miraculous in it.

8. The character here described is that of a person who is irresolute, drawn one way by a sense of duty, and another by some sinister view. Otherwise, it does not seem liable to so severe a censure.

10. If trials or temptations be of such great use in forming the character, and fitting men for future happiness, they who are improved, tho' they be distressed, in consequence of them, have reason to rejoice that, tho' they are thereby made poor in this world, they become what is elsewhere called *rich in faith*, and heirs of a better inheritance than any here below. The rich also have no reason to be concerned that they are deprived of their estate in this world, when they have a prospect of obtaining more than an equivalent hereafter.

11. Whether christians love their riches in this world, or not, they are, at best, but an uncertain possession.

15 The temptations here alluded to, are the trials attending a state of persecution; and tho' every thing is directed by divine providence, it is with the most benevolent intention. If, therefore, any thing in a man's situation lead him to swerve from his duty, this could not be the design of God. For he, who is righteous himself, must love righteousness in his creatures, and

must hate iniquity. All sins, therefore, must arise from the depraved inclinations of men.

17. Nothing but good is to be ascribed to God, and even the evils which he appoints are subservient to good. In all circumstances he is the same. It is thought, that after comparing God to light, and the sun, the great fountain of light, the apostle here uses some terms in astronomy, which denote that he is not like the natural sun, subject to any *parallax*, or a return from one part of the heavens to another, such as is the cause of the change of seasons.

18. The great object of the divine administration is to form us to virtue here, and happiness hereafter.

21. To secure an everlasting life. W.

22. Having observed that the end of all our discipline is to perfect our moral character, he adds other observations on the excellence of moral virtue above speculative principles.

24. An impression of any image, even that of a man's self on the eye, as by means of a mirror, is slight and evanescent, and may even be forgotten; and such a slight impression as this, is that which is made by the mere hearing of any thing, as it is often followed by no serious resolution, or change of conduct.

25. The *perfect law of liberty* must mean *Christianity*, which is frequently so called. This, if a man not only look at, but abide in, he will not, be a *forgetful hearer*, but a *doer* of what is written.

27. This is particularly directed against those whose religion consists in talking. The religion which will avail us in the sight of God is only that from which

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our fellow creatures derive real advantage, and which is attended with purity of heart and life.

Ch. II. The apostle having mentioned the state of the rich and of the poor, cautions christians against an undue respect for the rich. He then exhorts to universal obedience, and shews the insignificance of faith without works. The allusion seems to be to a precious stone, that was clear and without flaw: *καθαρά και ἀμωμή*.

1. This should have been rendered, *hold not the glorious faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons*; intimating that the profession of the gospel is so great a privilege, that all other distinctions among men are wholly insignificant when compared with it.

4. Do you not judge from wrong principles in paying so great a regard to riches.

5. There are many intimations in the scriptures of the generality of the rich having their *good things in this life only*, while the poor, being generally more virtuous, in consequence, no doubt, of having less temptation to excess, will have a better portion hereafter. Our Saviour's parable of the rich man and Lazarus is a fine illustration of this.

8. This precept, which comprizes all social duties, is called *royal*, to denote its great excellence.

9. Under the term *neighbour* are comprehended all persons with whom we have any intercourse, the poor as well as the rich; and therefore the latter are not entitled to any preference.

11. This is a maxim of peculiar importance. For
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if we knowingly and wilfully transgress any of the known commands of God, it is a proof that we are deficient in the proper principles of obedience. Any person judging for himself, and forming his own rule of life, and of course following his own inclinations, makes himself his own master. In like manner, we, in effect, renounce our obedience to God, if we allow ourselves to distinguish among his known commands, and conform only to some, while we disregard others. In this case when we do right, it is not from a right principle, and therefore will not be entitled to any reward. Then only can we be considered as the obedient servants of God, when we have respect unto all his commands without distinction.

We are not, however, to infer from this, that our obedience is required to be *perfect*, but only *impartial*, and directed to every thing that God requires of us; and whenever we are convinced that we have done wrong, we must not persist in it, but repent, and endeavour to reform.

12. That is, by the rule of the gospel which he had mentioned before, viz. that of doing to others as we would that they should do to us.

13. This is according to the petition in the Lord's prayer, which directs us to pray that God would forgive our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.

14. As some of the Jews to whom James wrote threw the blame of their vices upon God, as if by the temptations to which he exposed them he had brought them into sin; others, which indeed was the case of
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the Jews in general, laid the greatest stress on their knowledge of the law, and too little on the practice of it, the absurdity of which he proceeds to point out to them. It is possible also that some of the persons to whom James was writing had read the epistles of Paul, in which great stress is laid on *faith without the works of the law*, by which he meant nothing more than the *gospel*, as opposed to the *law*, or else that principle of obedience which was common to the law and the gospel, and which was known before the promulgation of the law of Moses, viz. that steady faith in the promises of God which is the great principle of all obedience, such as that which had distinguished Abraham. However, the persons to whom James wrote, if they had seen the epistles of Paul, probably interpreted them as many are apt to do at this day; supposing that by *faith* is meant the mere *act of believing*, and therefore that an orthodox faith will atone for immoral practice. This doctrine is well exposed by the following observations.

18. This may be rendered, *Shew me thy faith from, or out of, thy works*, implying that it could not be shewn at all without them. It is, therefore, the same as if he had said, let you and me both shew our faith by our works; and not depend on any other evidence of it. Some copies have both the expressions alike, *by or out of thy works*, and *by, or out of, my work*.

The better reading is, *without thy works*. W.

19. As an instance of faith by which to illustrate his argument, the apostle mentions the great article which equally distinguishes the law and the gospel, the doctrine

doctrine of *one God*, who is supposed to be infinitely wise, powerful, and good. That this faith would be of no avail of itself, he shews by saying that demons or evil spirits, who were supposed, according to notions of those times, to range about the world, and delight in doing mischief, had, no doubt, this knowledge of *God*; and a belief in his righteous government; but that this faith did not produce obedience, tho' it might then dread the divine displeasure.

23. It is remarkable that the case of Abraham is alleged by Paul as a proof of the efficacy of *faith alone*, and by James of the inefficacy of faith alone without works. But, as I have observed, by *faith* the apostle Paul meant faith in the promises of God, which necessarily leads to obedience; and therefore that it was not a mere speculative thing, or mere belief, of which James makes so little account. They both meant the same thing, tho' using words in different senses, they seem to contradict one another.

25. As the faith of Abraham produced obedience, and therefore was not mere faith; so the faith that Rahab had in what the spies told her, of the certainty of their success against her nation, led her to do them friendly offices.

26. This is a fine and just comparison. A mere *body*, such as was that of Adam when first formed, was motionless and dead; but when it was made to breathe and live, it was capable of action; so mere faith is a mere lifeless body, but faith producing good works is like a living man capable of action and enjoyment.

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Ch. III. The admonitions contained in this chapter relate to the violent spirit of faction which prevailed so much among the Jews, and in some degree, it may be presumed, among the Jewish christians. For the principles of religion do not immediately change the dispositions of men. A change of this nature is never instantaneous, but always gradual, the effect of reflection, and much exertion of mind. This spirit of faction, arising from a conceit of themselves, and their superior knowledge, would naturally shew itself in words, and therefore the apostle here urges the importance of governing the tongue. But the principal thing is to govern the temper itself; since from it, as from the proper source, all intemperance of language proceeds.

1. Offices in the christian church, at the time in which this epistle was written, exposed men to great danger, and were attended with little advantage; and yet we find that they were objects of desire and ambition, such a charm has every appearance of power, or pre-eminence, with mankind. The apostle Paul does not condemn this kind of ambition altogether. On the contrary, he says, that he that desires the office of a bishop or elder, desires a good thing. But the apostle James observes, that the more distinguished any man is, and the more he takes upon himself, the more he is answerable for, and consequently the more he exposes himself to censure, if he does not acquit himself as he ought.

2. The term *perfect* properly signifies *full grown*, not an infant, or a youth, but a state of manhood. It is with this allusion that it is generally used by Paul. Here

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we are given to understand, that intemperance of language is a mark of childhood, or youth, who speak what is uppermost, as we say, without much reflection on the consequences of what they say ; whereas it is the part of a man to think before he speaks. By means of the tongue, tho' a small member, he says, the man is governed. But it seems more proper to say, that the man governs or directs the tongue, than that the tongue governs the man, and the following illustrations are rather trifling than solid.

6. That is, as much mischief may be done by the tongue, by unguarded improper language, as by a fire, which beginning with a spark may proceed to the greatest extent, and make as great devastation as if some demon had been employed to effect the worst of purposes.

According to the Syriac, it is *The tongue is a fire, and the world of iniquity is wood*. Mr. W. renders this a *varnisher of iniquity*.

8. There is rather too much of rhetoric in this charge. For strictly speaking there is no more difficulty in restraining the tongue than any other member ; language is only one manner in which passion vents itself, and sometimes actions are more prompt than words.

12. I cannot say that there appears to me to be much of justness, or use, in these comparisons. The tongue speaks as it is prompted by the mind, and if the temper of the mind changes, the language will change of course. They, are however, so far useful, as they admonish us that every man ought to cultivate an uniformity, and steadiness of character, and then his language will always

ways be uniform, and the man will not at different times be different from himself.

14. The great boast of the Jews, and especially of the Gnostics among them, to whom it is possible that the apostle may here allude, was their superior knowledge, or wisdom; and he justly admonishes them, that superior wisdom is best shewn in a man's conduct, and especially by the meekness and moderation of it, and not by faction and contention, to which they were much addicted.

15. The wisdom which the Gnostics boasted of related to the most sublime subjects; but he shews them that their conduct proved that the wisdom, or the principle by which they were really actuated, was not that sublime and heavenly kind that they pretended, but of earthly origin and tendency; and that it was so far from being divine, or from God, that it might be said to be from the devil, producing those works which are always ascribed to the source of all evil.

17. *ἀδικοῦντες* may be rendered *without nice distinction*, to whom we do kind offices, as God is good to the unthankful and the unworthy.

18. Mr. W. renders, *the peaceable fruits of righteousness are sown, for the makers of peace.*

Here is an excellent description of true or heavenly wisdom, which shews itself by an upright conduct, especially in promoting peace and good will, and suppressing every thing that tends to produce disturbance in society.

Ch. IV. The vices which the apostle reproves in this chapter are so great, that it cannot well be supposed that

that this part of the epistle was addressed to christians, but rather to the unbelieving Jews, who, according to Josephus, were at that time wicked and profligate in the extreme. Having just before observed what was *true wisdom*, and what was that spurious kind of which the Gnostic Jews boasted, that the former led to universal virtue, and the other to vice, he now observes, that the wars which the Jews waged with one another, and with their neighbours, must have arisen from some vicious principle.

1. Lusts, or unreasonable desires, are very properly said to be in a state of war within a man ; being inconsistent with one another, and therefore making a man at variance with himself

2 You indulge immoderate desires, but do not get what you desire. You even scruple not to commit murder in order to obtain your ends, but are no nearer to the accomplishment of them. You proceed to open war, especially for the liberty you so much covet, a freedom from your subjection to the Romans, but you do not gain even this desirable advantage, because you do not look up to God for it, tho' you pretend that you cannot lawfully submit to any other master.

3. If you do pray for this blessing, you do not receive it ; because you would not make a proper use of it if you were possessed of it. You would only abuse your liberty to your own hurt and that of others.

4 You, whose unrestrained passions carry you to the greatest crimes, even that of adultery, as well as murder ; and thereby shew that you have no views beyond this world, are you not sensible that, being thus the
friends

friends of the world, and the lusts of it, you are in a state of enmity with God. For you cannot love God, as you pretend to do, and indulge in these lusts at the same time.

5. As this verse is here rendered, we are led to expect a quotation from the scriptures, but no such passage is found in the Old Testament. But by making the second clause an interrogation, which we are fully at liberty to do, since the pointing of the scriptures is arbitrary, we remove the difficulty. It will then read thus, *Do you think that the scriptures speak in vain*, that is, when they condemn the vices above mentioned? *Does the spirit that dwells within us*, that is the spirit of God, or the holy spirit, lead to this envy and contention?

6. On the contrary, the greatest favour is in the scriptures promised to those who are of a meek and humble disposition. We frequently read that God resisteth the proud, but grants his favour to the humble.

7. Put on, therefore, that meek and humble spirit, especially with respect to God. If you will resist, let it be every temptation to sin; and in this your opposition will be successful, but not against God.

10. All these exhortations are designed to recommend that submissive spirit, and that patient trust in God, in which the Jews were much deficient.

11. You Jews, from a spirit of pride, are apt to abuse and revile one another; but in doing this you really judge and condemn the law itself, which forbids those practices. How, then, can you hope to be reward-

ed, as observers of the law, on which your pretensions are so high.

12. In judging the law you set yourselves above the lawgiver, that is God, who is omnipotent, and who will not suffer such conduct to go unpunished.

13. The apostle now proceeds to animadvert upon other things that were deserving of censure in those to whom he wrote; and in the first place a want of a due sense of the uncertainty of life, and consequently a too eager pursuit of worldly gain.

16. So far are you from having a due sense of the uncertainty of life, and of your dependance on God, that you indulge yourselves immoderately in this arrogant discourse.

17. As you boast of your knowledge of the law, which evidently condemns the vices that I have been cautioning you against, you are the more inexcusable.

Ch. V. The greatest part of this epistle is, no doubt, addressed to the believing Jews; but the part that is immediately before us respects the unbelievers among them, and especially the rich, the luxurious, and the oppressive. The leading Jews of this time, if they saw this epistle, could not but perceive that it was aimed at them; and being stung by these severe reproaches, they might naturally think of taking their revenge by the death of this apostle, which soon followed.

1. This was delivered with a prophetic spirit. No doubt that not only James, but the christians in general, were led by our Saviour's prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem to attend to the *signs of the times*, so distinctly pointed out by him; and foreseeing the
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the storm that was approaching, they fled; as he advised them to do. For we are informed by ecclesiastical historians, that when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, there were no christians in it. They had all taken refuge in a neighbouring part of Syria, where they had peace, and where they continued many years, equally distinct from the unbelieving Jews and the converted Gentiles.

2. The treasures of the antients consisted chiefly of two articles, gold, silver, or precious stones, and rich apparel. For the person who made an entertainment furnished his guests with decent garments, such as they could not have conveniently walked in. When they arrived, the first thing that was done was to wash their feet, and then they were presented with these garments; and as their dress was loose, there was no danger of their not fitting them. Now both these kinds of treasure were liable to suffer for want of use. The garments would be liable to be moth eaten, and the metals to rust, which of itself would be a proof that no use was made of them. This rust, would, therefore be a witness against them. And as, besides, the rust of some metals is of a very corrosive nature, here is perhaps an allusion to that property by which it would, as it were, eat into their very flesh, and destroy it, as fire does; being alike caustic.

By the *latter days* the apostle probably meant the latter days of the Jewish state, those foretold by our Saviour, which were to be days of *great tribulation*, so that treasures heaped up against such a time were trea-

silver collected not to be enjoyed, but to be plundered and dispersed.

4. More is another symptom of the great abuse of wealth and power, for which they would be severely punished by God, who is called *the Lord of Sabaoth*, or *hosts*, the hosts of heaven, and also of armies on earth, the God who is possessed of supreme power both in heaven and earth. This was an appellation given to the true God, perhaps as superior to the sun moon and stars, called the *best of heaven*, which were the principal objects of the heathen worship.

5. As in a day of public feasting, as after a sacrifice.

6. By the *just one*, is probably meant Jesus Christ, who was so called by Peter, who used the same language in his discourse to the Jews. After curing the lame man at the gate of the temple; saying, *ye denied the holy and the just one, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the prince of life.*

Some copies read, *he did not resist you*, alluding to the meekness with which Jesus bore his sufferings.

7. The word *rain* is not in many MSS. and therefore the last clause should be rendered, *to receive the early and latter fruits.* W.

8. From the patience of Jesus, who did not resist his murderers, the apostle exhorts all the christians among the Jews, to whom he now addresses himself, to bear their sufferings with the like patience; and you will observe that he calls the term of this patience the *coming of the Lord*, plainly supposing that they would have no reward of their patience till that time, which is

is agreeable to the whole tenor of scripture ; which of course is inconsistent with the idea of an intermediate state of happiness between death and the resurrection.

The apostle here says, *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh* ; and it is very possible that he, and the other apostles, might imagine that it was much nearer than it really was, tho' it is evident from the epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, that they did not expect it in their life time.

9. In the state of persecution in which you now are, be careful to entertain no degree of ill will to one another, but rather love, and support, one another.

12. These exhortations are very nearly the same which Jesus addressed to his disciples in his discourse from the mount : and this repetition of it shews that an addictedness to profane swearing must have been very common among the Jews, and that they did not immediately lay it aside on becoming christians, tho' nothing is more inconsistent with that reverence for God, which all Jews professed to have.

13. The apostle prescribes proper duties to different classes of persons, as to the rich and the poor, in several respects. He now addresses himself to those who were in circumstances either of affliction, or joy. To the former he recommends prayer and humiliation, and to the latter singing of psalms, by way of thanksgiving to that God from whom all happiness proceeds.

14. Among the spiritual gifts enumerated by the apostle Paul, one was the gift of *healing*. As this was known to be in the church, tho' not always exerted (for Paul speaks of some of his friends being sick, when, no

doubt; he would have restored them to health, if it had been in his power) It could not be improper in any person to endeavour to get relief in this way; and for this purpose they were to send for the elders of the church, whose duty it was to visit the sick and afflicted. Among other applications, in hot climates oil was very common, being used both for pleasure and health; tho' why it should have been applied to all the sick indiscriminately does not appear. This application, however, was made by the twelve on their mission. For when they returned, Mark says (Ch. vi, 13) *And they anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them; when the other evangelists only say, that they healed the sick.*

15. The prayer of faith must have been suggested by a supernatural impulse on the mind, which ensured the effect, and as all sickness was usually ascribed to sin, the cure of it was naturally considered as an intimation of the forgiveness of the sin. Thus Jesus used the phrases *rise up and walk*, or *thy sins be forgiven thee*, as equivalent expressions.

16. If the sick person was conscious of any particular sin, which he supposed to be the cause of his sickness, he was very properly advised to unburden his mind, by a frank confession of it, encouraged by the consideration of the efficacy of prayer, such as the pious elders of the church would put up for him.

18. This example, it is evident, is that of a real miracle, and therefore, tho' it suited the age of the apostles, does not suit ours.

20. When the confession of sin was made, it would of course be the duty of the person to whom it was made

made, to exhort him to refrain from it, and if he succeeded, he performed the most meritorious of all actions. For what can be more beneficial to men than to rectify their mistakes, and correct their vices. We read in Daniel xii,' 3. that *they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.*

NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

P E T E R.

THE apostle Peter, tho' the first who opened the door of faith, as it is called, to the Gentiles, by the conversion of Cornelius and his friends, never went upon any mission to them; and when he was at Antioch, it appears that he rather joined the party of the Judaizers, for which Paul justly reprov'd him.

As this epistle is addressed to *strangers* dispersed through several provinces of Asia Minor, it is probable that from Antioch Peter had made excursions into those parts, which abounded with Jews; and to them by agreement with Paul and Barnabas, (Gal. ii, 7.) his ministry was chiefly confined.

This epistle seems to have been written not long after Paul was released from Rome, and as it contains

salutations from the church at Babylon, where at that time there were many Jews, some of whom, no doubt, were christians, it is probable that he wrote from this place, tho' he might afterwards go to Rome, and there write his second epistle, as according to tradition, he suffered martyrdom there.

The object of this first epistle is to exhort the christians to whom he wrote, to persevere in the profession of the gospel, notwithstanding the difficulties under which they then laboured. With this view he represents to them in a very strong light, the honour and advantage which they derived from the knowledge of the gospel; and having enlarged on this, he exhorts them to adorn their profession of it by the observance of the moral duties of life, which he particularly enumerates.

Ch. I. 1. As all Jews, tho' in great numbers in these provinces, were *strangers*, and the Gentiles were not so, it is evident that this epistle is principally addressed to them; tho' there is a sense in which all christians, Gentiles as well as Jews, are called *strangers* in the world.

2. Peter, not being accustomed to writing, does not do it in the happiest manner. There is an evident embarrassment in the structure of this sentence; but there is, in the whole of this chapter, an air of peculiar dignity and energy, becoming the *prince*, as he is often called, *of the apostles*. Great thoughts crowded upon his mind, and accordingly his language is strong, but the argument of his words not easy. I shall endeavour to express his meaning in the paraphrase.

3. Here

5. Here the supreme being is called *the God*, as well as the *father*, of Jesus Christ. Could this language have been adopted by any person who had considered Christ as being God equal to the Father?

The difference made by christianity in the state of ~~men~~ is here expressed by a figure that was not uncommon with the Jews, and other oriental nations, of a *second birth*. It is remarkable that the Bramins of Hindostan always speak of those who are acquainted with their scriptures as *twice born men*. The phrase occurs perpetually in the *Institutes of Menu*.

5. By the revelation of Jesus-Christ must be understood his coming in glory, to take possession of his proper kingdom.

8. Some copies of good authority read, whom having not *known ye love*, but the sense is the same.

11. The *spirit of Christ* must mean the spirit by which Christ was actuated; and to him, as we read, this spirit, the spirit of God, was given *without measure*.

This may mean the sufferings of good men for the sake of Christ.

12. This can only mean that it is a subject worthy of the curiosity of angels. That any angels are actually so employed, is more than we are informed of.

13. This, as well as every other similar intimation of scripture, refers all the hopes of christians to the second coming of Christ.

14. This must have been intended for the Gentile christians. The Jews are never spoken of as *ignorant*, but as abusing their superior knowledge.

21. If

21. If all the glory that Christ had was given to him by God, and if God raised him from the dead, what evidence is there of his being, or having, more than other men, independently of God?

23. The authors of our first, or natural, birth, were beings who were themselves liable to corruption and death, and therefore so must be their offspring; but the author of our second, or spiritual birth, a birth to the life and the privileges of christians, is the *power of God*, which abideth for ever; so therefore will the effects of our second birth.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, address this epistle chiefly to the christian Jews who are dispersed in several provinces of Asia Minor, who have been called to the faith of the gospel, according to the original design of God the Father, in a new covenant, confirmed not by the blood of brute animals, but that of Christ, and by the gifts of the holy spirit, the great object of which is purity of heart and life. May you enjoy all the blessings of it.

Praise be to that great and good being, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, as well as our God and Father; who has not only given us the life which we derive from our natural birth, but who has, as it were, caused us to be born again, to a life of unspeakably more value, of which we have an example in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first who after death has entered upon this new life. The advantages derived from this
new

new life are not such perishable things as we receive in this, but something of a more durable nature, and more pure; and tho' not enjoyed at present, faithfully kept for us in heaven, if we persevere in the profession and obedience of the gospel.

This deliverance from all trouble, awaits us at that period which is in the scriptures called *the last times*; and in the prospect of this we rejoice, tho' in the mean time we suffer grievous persecution. Of the use of this state of trial you cannot be insensible. For by this means our faith, which is a thing of more value than gold, is tried and refined, that it may be found bright and shining at the second coming of Christ. So lively is your faith in him, that tho' you have had no personal knowledge of him, you have the strongest attachment to him, and rejoice in a manner not to be described, in the firm belief of the glory to which you will attain, when you receive that happiness of which the gospel gives you an assurance.

The prophets of former times, who gave intimations of these great blessings, perceived, after an anxious and diligent enquiry (writing under the guidance of that spirit by which Christ himself acted and which shewed them beforehand his sufferings in this state, and his glory in the next) that they were not designed for their times, but for our's. And it is in the accomplishment of these prophecies that we have preached the gospel to you, and have confirmed it by the gifts of the spirit. These are subjects of praise and wonder, not to men only, but even to angels, who are spectators and agents in the great scene.

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Having these glorious prospects, do not fail to exert yourselves in the most strenuous manner; and whatever be your trials and sufferings, persevere till you actually reach that glorious and happy state which will take place at the second coming of Christ. But do not fail to consider that the great object of his religion, and which alone can qualify you for the participation of its promised blessings, is a pure and holy life. Abandon then, all the vices to which those of you who were Gentiles were addicted, while you were unacquainted with its principles. As God who has opened this glorious prospect to you is holy, be you also holy; which is a motive to holiness proposed in the writings of Moses.

Since your religion respects God, who pays no regard to external privileges or professions, but judges according to the real character and conduct of men, be anxious to approve your hearts to him. Consider at how great a price you may be said to have been purchased by him, and that his sole object in it was your reformation and future happiness. It was not silver or gold that he gave, but his beloved Son Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed as that of a lamb without blemish, such as are required for sacrifices by the law of Moses.

The plan of this gospel was laid in the councils of God before the foundation of the world, tho' it was not accomplished before our times, when Christ lived among us, died, and rose from the dead. As this was effected by the power of God, who not only raised him from the dead, but also gave him the power and glory to
which

which he is now exalted, our faith is fixed on God himself, and therefore has the strongest foundation possible.

As one of the most distinguishing precepts of the gospel, which was confirmed by the holy spirit, is the love of the brethren, see that you cherish this divine principle. This is worthy of the new life, to which you are now born; not as in your natural birth, of parents who, being mortal themselves, can only produce a mortal offspring, but of the power of God, who never dies. As to men, we see that they are all mortal, and that even the most distinguished of them die as well as others, like the grass in the fields, and the flowers that grow there; but the power from which is derived your new and spiritual life continues for ever; and this is the power which accompanies the preaching of the gospel.

Ch. II. The apostle having mentioned the new birth of christians, a birth to a new life, and new privileges, exhorts to the discharge of the duties of it; insisting particularly on such virtues as the exigency of the times would call into exercise.

2. The idea of a new birth, and of the childlike state, with which it must be commenced, suggested the idea of the *simplicity* of children, an idea more than once alluded to by our Saviour. Children are patterns to men in being free from malice, guilt, hypocrisy, envy or ambition. The same idea of a childlike state suggested that of *food* proper for children, which, with respect to our new life, is the pure word of God.

3 This

3. This is a figure drawn from that of receiving nourishment by food, which is peculiarly necessary for children.

4. *A living stone*, may mean a part of the natural rock, fixed, and as it were growing in the earth.

8. Here a new figure of speech is introduced. The christian church is compared to a *building*, in which Christ is the corner stone, and individual christians the other stones which compose the structure. Moreover, this building is a *temple*, in which there must be priests and sacrifices. For this figurative language the apostle alleges some passage of scripture, as 1st. xxviii, 16. 2d. cxviii, 22. At the same time he observes that these stones are not dead, but living ones, and the building a spiritual one.

The corner stone in a Jewish building was not in the foundation, but at the top of an angle, which therefore connected two walls in the building. He observes, however, that tho^t Christ be a stone, so much respected by some, it would be a stone at which others would stumble and fall; conveying the same idea that our Saviour did in several of his parables, in which he represented the different receptions of his gospel by persons of different characters.

9. This language, which was first applied to the Hebrew nation, as set apart for the greatest purposes of divine providence, as the *peculiar treasure of God*, the apostle applies to christians, who are also said to be *kings and priests unto God*. In primitive times the prince discharged the offices of chief priest to his nation.

10. In this the apostle had a view to the Gentile christians. Of the Jews he could never speak in so degrading a manner, as not having been a people, or not the people of God.

11. It particularly behoved strangers and pilgrims, not to pamper themselves, but to observe the strictest rules of temperance, in order to advance in their journey, having no idea of a fixed residence : and tho' sensual indulgence primarily affects the body, it tends to contaminate and debase the mind, converting a man into a brute.

12. The *day of visitation* probably means the season of trial and persecution, when the behaviour of christians would be more particularly observed by their adversaries, on whom their proper behaviour in those circumstances would make a favourable impression.

In the *day of visitation*, or *enquiry*, may mean when ye are examined on the subject of obedience to governors. W.

16. The Jews in general were accused of being a turbulent refractory nation. Their peculiar aversion to a foreign yoke was undisguised. Many of them thought it to be expressly forbidden by their laws ; since they were directed, whenever they should make a king, to chuse one of their own nation, and not a stranger. And tho' this respected a case in which they should have the liberty of choice, they extended it to one in which they had none. The apostle, however, earnestly advises to silence this accusation by their peaceable and submissive behaviour to the government under which they lived. Tho' as christians, they were
said

said to be *free*, and the Gentiles among them not subject to the yoke of the law, they were still the servants of God, and ought not to abuse their liberty.

20. A meek temper, not disposed to resent injuries, was particularly inculcated by Jesus in his discourse on the mount; and if this is becoming free men, much more is it proper for those who are in a state of servitude. And considering themselves as the servants of God, they might depend on their receiving a proper reward for their obedience, whether their earthly master requited their services in a proper manner, or not.

23. The example of Jesus is very properly alleged as a pattern of meekness under the worst usage.

According to the Vulgate it is, *to him that judges unrighteously*, meaning our Saviour's judges.

24. That christians should be free from *sin* the apostle represents by the idea of Christ having taken them away, and crucified them, together with himself; not that he assumed the character of the sinner, so as to suffer the punishment due to the *sins* of other persons. This is never the idea of the sacred writers. It certainly was not that of Matthew, who when he had given an account of Jesus having cured some sick persons, said (Ch. viii. 17.) that then was fulfilled the saying of Isaiah, *he bore our sicknesses*, meaning only that he bore them away, or removed them, not that he took them upon himself.

Ch. III. The apostle proceeds with his advice from the duties of men, to those of women, and then to others relating to a season of persecution, of which he had treated before. Nothing can well be more free
from

from any technical order than this epistle, and indeed the greater part of those of Paul; which shews that they were not writers by profession, but wrote what the heart prompted at the time, putting down first that which was uppermost in their minds, and afterwards such things as most readily occurred to them; all the advices they gave appearing to them to be of importance, but without any regard to natural connection. How different in this, and every other respect, are these epistles from those of Pliny, or Seneca. They most resemble those of Cicero, which were written on real occasions; but then these were the epistles of a man of letters. A person attending to this one circumstance only, could never suspect the epistles in the New Testament to be forgeries. They must have little knowledge of human nature who can entertain the idea.

1. This respects the case of women whose husbands were not christians. of which there must have been many examples, as well as of husbands whose wives were not. So much inconvenience arose from this circumstance, that Paul strongly advises against contracting such marriages. Tertullian in his exhortation against them many years afterwards, asks if one of the parties be a christian and the other not, what can they sing to one another? it being much the practice of christians in the early times to sing hymns and psalms in their own houses.

2. That is a respectful behaviour.

6. This alludes to Sarah speaking a falsehood through fear, in denying that she had laughed when she heard that, at her advanced age, she should have a

child, which she thought to be impossible. Against this defect in Sarah's conduct the apostle would guard other women.

7. The first part of this advice respects many of the Gnostic teachers, whose tenets were unfriendly to marriage. In all this the subjection of the wife to the husband, which was enjoined upon Eve, is enforced. This does not arise from the superior strength of the man, and still less from any natural superiority of understanding. But as the general direction of affairs must, to avoid confusion, be in one of the parties, it more naturally falls to the man, whose employment leads him abroad to provide for the subsistence of his family, than to the woman, whose frame better fits her for domestic employment.

12. Here the apostle quotes several passages of scripture, recommending virtue in general, and especially meekness.

13. This phrase frequently occurs in the writings of Moses, as when God denounces the punishment of Moses and Aaron, *because, he says Num. xx. 12. ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore, shall ye not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* In Isaiah we read Ch. viii, 12. *Fear not their fear, speaking of the Assyrian armies, but sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear and let him be your dread.* The meaning, therefore, is that from a firm belief in the power and providence of God, they should dread nothing but his displeasure; and when in the way of their duty, fear nothing that men could do unto them.

When

When they were questioned concerning their faith, they were to explain the grounds of it in a modest and respectful manner.

18. As mankind derived great benefit from the death and resurrection of Christ, it was natural to say that he died for them, without having the idea of his being considered as taking their sins upon himself, and suffering in their stead. As our Saviour said that men could only kill the body, so with respect to him, the apostle says he suffered only in the flesh, but was raised to life by the power of God. For *spirit* does not mean his own spirit. By this term we are always to understand *the spirit of God*, when nothing is added to restrict its meaning.

20. Christ, who was filled with the spirit of God, even without measure, preached to those who, in a figurative sense, might be said to be *in prison*, bound with the chains of sin. Sometimes it is said of the same persons that they are even *dead in trespasses and sin*. In the next chapter, v. 6. this apostle says *for this cause was the gospel preached to them that were dead*. As an example of this he mentions the case of Noah, whose preaching made no impression on the men of his generation, so that only his wife and his own children hearkened to him. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage as follows, *Being killed in body, but made alive by spirit, in which, indeed, he went and preached to the minds of men in prison, who were also hard to be convinced in former times, as when the patience of God continued waiting in the days of Noah*. The christians in early times when they had got the idea of the souls of men being

distinct from their bodies, and capable of thinking and acting without them, but yet supposed that all souls after death went to a place called *hades*, under ground, and there waited for the resurrection, thought, as from the authority of this passage, that the human soul of Christ, in the interval between his death and resurrection, went to this *hades*, and preaching to those who had went before him, converted many of them.

22. Having mentioned the case of Noah and his family being saved by water, he was led by it to the case of christians being saved by baptism. But he observes that it does not save men by its property of washing, or cleansing the body ; for that this is effected not by water, but by purity of heart and life. He farther observes, that our salvation, or the doctrine of our salvation, is confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, who being exalted to the right hand of God, and all power being given to him, will in due time appear to the complete salvation of all his faithful followers.

Ch. IV. The exhortation contained in this chapter chiefly respects a state of persecution, a subject which we may observe frequently occurs in this epistle, which shews that the apostle wrote from the fulness of his heart, without much regard to method.

2. Here the sufferings of Christ are represented in the same light with those of his followers. Christians are exhorted to exert the same fortitude, that suffering in the flesh as he did, they might be free from sin as he was.

3. From this passage it may be clearly inferred that many of those to whom this epistle was addressed were

Gentiles

Gentiles, whose public festivals are justly characterized as scenes of dissoluteness and debauchery, by means of which the common people were much attached to their religion. Yet, tho' vices of every kind were countenanced by the rites of the heathen religion, the philosophers and legislators made no attempts to abolish, or even to reform them. The festival of Bacchus in Greece, and the Lupercalia at Rome, were as abominably indecent in the age of Augustus, as in the rudest times of antiquity.

5. Attached as the heathens were to these indecent festivals, they wondered that the christians should desert them, and censured them for their preciseness. But the judgments of men are of little value when compared with that of God, who will finally judge all men.

6. But it is for this reason that the gospel is preached to those who are, as it were, dead with respect to rational life, that they might be subject to censure for the life they lived according to the lusts of men in the flesh, and live a spiritual life according to the will of God.

7. Since the time of righteous judgment is not very distant, be vigilant, and prepare for it. There is no doubt but that the apostles, and the primitive christians in general, expected the second coming of Christ to be much nearer than it was, tho' they did not look for it in their own times, and did not pretend to fix any particular time for it. They knew that he was to come unexpectedly as a *thief in the night*. Jesus himself said that the time of this event was known to his Father only.

ly: Their mistake, therefore, on this subject is no argument against the reality of this event in particular, or the truth of christianity in general.

10. *The gift* in this place probably means spiritual gifts, not riches, tho' they are the gifts of God.

11. Let the presbyters, whose office it is to teach, and the deacons, who attend to the external concerns of the church, be attentive to their respective duties. Here the apostle seems to have closed his epistle, but the case of christians then exposed to persecution being much upon his mind, he reverts to it again.

12. They had been fully apprized of their state of trial by our Saviour himself, who gave his followers no expectation of any thing but persecution in this life, and happiness in the life to come.

13. Here again the sufferings of Christ are represented in the same light with those of his followers. So the apostle Paul observed, that if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him, and be glorified together.

14. That is the glorious spirit of God.

16. Give glory to God by a patient and becoming behaviour under persecution, and even be thankful that you are called to suffer in so glorious a cause. Thus, of the apostles it is said, Acts v. 41, *they rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.*

18. The sufferings of the righteous, tho' great, are always represented as small compared with those which are reserved for the wicked. This Jesus expressed by saying, *If these things be done in the green wood, what will*

will be done in the dry, which will burn with much more violence.

19. Let them who die in this persecution commit their *lives* (for so it ought to have been rendered) unto God, who as he at first formed them, and gave them life, can, and will restore it, in his appointed time.

Ch. V. The apostle closes his epistle with repeating several of the exhortations which he had urged before, and on which it may therefore be supposed that he laid particular stress.

1. Tho' he might have assumed a higher rank, and more authority, he chose to consider himself as on a level with other teachers in the christian church; so that what he said might appear like the advice of one christian brother to another.

Here we have the testimony of Peter to the sufferings of Jesus, having been himself a witness of them. And tho' he expected, according to his master's prediction, to suffer a violent death himself, he was not discouraged by it, but speaks with confidence of the glory which he should share along with him, in order to encourage other christians to suffer with the same fortitude.

3. How little regard was paid to this by christian bishops in after times, when they assumed dominion not only over the inferior clergy, but even over princes, and one of them, the bishop of Rome, claimed to himself all power in heaven and earth.

5. No one virtue is so frequently recommended to us as this of humility, and no vice so earnestly caution-

ed against as pride, the reverse of it, in the Old Testament. There meekness often stands for piety and virtue in general, and pride for impiety and vice. In fact, virtue may be considered as obedience to a rule or law, in opposition to being subject to no will but our own. Humility makes this easy to us, but pride submits with reluctance.

8. By this *adversary*, or *devil*, we may understand the enemies of christianity in general, Jews or heathens, who were always watching to surprize and injure the christians.

9. The case of those to whom the apostle wrote was not peculiar to them. All their brethren on this side the grave were subject to the same.

10. The great ground of consolation under all the trials of this life is, that they tend to perfect the human character, and prepare us for that glory which is reserved for those who shall be so improved. Our Saviour himself was *made perfect through sufferings*. Hebrews.

12. It has been well observed that this phrase *I suppose* is a proof that this epistle was not written under any consciousness of divine inspiration. Since the divine being could not speak of any thing with uncertainty, Peter only took it for granted, or presumed, that this Sylvanus was a faithful brother, but would not absolutely warrant it. By him he assures them that the gospel which they had received from him, and which he hoped they retained, was the truth, and therefore that they ought to be on their guard against all who would lead them from it.

13. This is the evangelist Mark, who tho' he once attended Paul, is said to have attached himself afterwards to Peter, and to have written his gospel from his instruction. He was after this, bishop of Alexandria in Egypt.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

P E T E R.

THIS second epistle of Peter was for some time classed among the books of doubtful authenticity, tho' there are in it evident references to the former, the same spirit prevails through the whole, and the same simplicity and dignity in the composition. This epistle was evidently written not long before the death of the apostle, and as all the antients say that this was at Rome, in A. D. 64 or 65, he was probably there then.

This second epistle may be considered as a supplement to the former. In it the apostle warns christians more particularly of their danger from those who corrupted the gospel, alluding, no doubt, to the Gnostic teachers of that age, whose practice was generally believed to be as corrupt as their principles. He also exhorts to vigilance and constancy in the discharge of our duties

duties, from the consideration of the dissolution of the world, and the coming of Christ to judgment.

1. *Righteousness* does not always mean strict justice but rather virtue and goodness in general, and sometimes even mercy and favour, as when Paul says of God, *that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* Rom.

In the original it is *δια δόξης και ἀρεῆς* through *glory and virtue*, the meaning of which it is not easy to ascertain. It is probably a hebraism. Mr. Wakefield renders it, *by a glorious kindness* ἀρεῆη having sometimes that meaning, as well as that of *virtue* in general, of which it is a branch.

3. According to the Alexandrian MSS. it is, *By his own glory and virtue.*

4. Christians who live up to their profession are here said to become *partakers of a divine nature*; but by this is only meant to become *like God*, or to be *one with him*, in the sense in which our Saviour used that phrase in his prayer before his death, when he prayed that his disciples might be one with him and his father, as they two were one. Had it so happened that this phrase *partaker of a divine nature* had been used with respect to Christ only, it would have been deemed a most unanswerable argument for his proper divinity. For what, it would have been said, could more clearly express this than his having *the same nature*?

5. By *virtue* in this place must be meant *fortitude*, to enable us to bear persecution.

7. *Charity* means something more general than brotherly love, and therefore must be universal benevolence.

8. We

8. We see here that the end of the gospel is the forming of a virtuous character. Without this the knowledge of the gospel is like seed that is sown without producing any increase. Destitute of this, with all our knowledge we are barren and unfruitful.

9. That is, he does not discern, or has lost sight of the proper design of the gospel, which was to be cleansed from the sins of their former lives.

10. Good MSS. add *by good works, to making our calling and election sure.*

14. This may refer either to some recent intimation given him by Christ, such as he gave occasionally to Paul, or to what he said to him before his ascension, when he told him that when he should be old, he would be bound and carried whither he would not, signifying, as the evangelist says, *by what death he should glorify God.*

18. Here we have the attestation of one who was present at the extraordinary scene of the transfiguration. Peter, when near his death, declares that christianity is no fable, such as the heathen religion was founded on, but supported by real facts, to one of the most extraordinary of which this apostle was a witness, together with James and John, two other apostles.

19. This might be rendered, *we have the word of prophecy made more sure, or confirmed.* Till the appearance of the light of the gospel the intimation of these things in the antient prophets were obscure, and wanted confirmation.

20. The prophets were not themselves the interpreters of their own predictions. For they did not speak
or

or write, from their own suggestion, but delivered what was dictated to them by the spirit of God, so that by the help of subsequent events we may have a more perfect understanding of what they wrote, than they had themselves.

Ch. II. The apostle having mentioned the ancient *prophets*, is led to speak of the *false prophets* under the Old Testament, and those whom he considered in the same light in his own time, meaning the Gnostics, whose doctrines gave the greatest offence to all the apostles, as overturning what they thought to be fundamental in the christian scheme, and leading to licentious conduct.

1 In this, I have no doubt, the apostle alludes to the Gnostic teachers, who from other evidence appear to have been the only heretics in the christian church, that is the only persons who separated themselves from other christians, and formed societies of their own, in the time of the apostles, and long after. They are here said to have *denied the Lord that bought them*, because they had ideas concerning the person of Christ different from those of other christians, either supposing him to have been a pre-existent spirit, who inhabited a human body, or that only assumed the appearance of one; but in neither case to have been exposed to pain and suffering, as Jesus was. They, therefore, supposed him to have been another kind of being from what he really was, and no proper pattern for us, in his life, his death, or his resurrection. In the opinion of the apostles the Gnostics were not only erroneous in their opinions, but dissolute in their practice, and therefore, no doubt, devoted

devoted to destruction. As to their opinions merely, if this apostle and others were so much shocked with their making him to be a superangelic being, how much more would they have been scandalized, if they had made him to be God equal to the Father ?

2. Some MSS, have *lascivious lives*, and the Gnostics were charged with an addictedness to vices of this kind.

3. The Gnostics were men of learning, and, as appears from the writings of Paul, some of them were eloquent speakers, and were paid for their discourses.

5. This passage and another similar to it in Jude, has been thought to prove the fall of angels from their original station in heaven. But as all the other examples here mentioned are from the Old Testament history, and we have no other account of this fall of angels, it is probable that it is only an allusion to some circumstance or other in the writings of Moses. Various have been the conjectures of learned men on the subject ; but what appears to me the most probable is that which was suggested by Mr. Palmer (now in Botany Bay) in the *Theological Repository*, Vol. V. p. 166. which is, that they were those who, in the account of the Antideluvians, are called the *Sons of God*, a term which in the Seventy is often rendered *angels*, and who, with the rest of the old world, were destroyed in the deluge, when Noah and his family were saved. This makes the whole a connected series of examples, for the others follow in the order of time, the next being that of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha.

10 These are other characters of the Gnostics. *They* were charged with impure practices. At the same time they were in the age of the apostles chiefly *Jews*, who disclaimed all subjection to foreigners. Of this there are numerous intimations in the writings of Paul.

11. To what the apostle alludes in this place, or Jude v. 9. in a similar passage, in which he says, that *Michael the Archangel, disputing with the Devil about the body of Moses, did not bring any railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee*, does not appear with certainty. Some think it is to some apocryphal story that is now lost. But others think it only an allusion to Zech. iii, 1. where we read, *And he shewed me Joshua the high-priest standing by the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee; supposing, with some of the antients, that by Joshua was meant the Jewish people, whom Jude might call the body of Moses, as Paul calls christians the body of Christ.*

18. According to some MSS. it is *those who had for a short time only escaped them that live in error.*

19. If the Gnostics were universally, or generally, persons of the character here described, the sentence which the apostle passes upon them was, no doubt, just. Men abandoned to wickedness, whatever be their opinions, will be punished in another world; but as they were persons who made a profession of christianity, and some of them in after ages were even martyrs, it may be presumed that this very black character did not apply to all the Gnostics. They believed in the divine mission of

of Christ, whatever they might think of his person, and they expected a future state of retribution, tho' not in the body. They had, therefore, sufficient motives to a virtuous life, and these must have had their proper effects on some, and the purest principles do not produce their proper effects on all.

22. These Gnostics must have been such as had not always been of that class, but had been led to adopt their principles from the representation that had been given of them, and had probably been much influenced by the learning and eloquence of their teachers. For they were the philosophers of the age, while the apostles in general had no pretensions to any human learning. They had only a plain story to tell, and it required only such attestation as they were qualified to give to it.

24. The apostle considers sin as fastened to the cross along with Christ.

Ch. III. In the last part of this epistle, the apostles cautions the christians to whom he writes against the heathens, who believed in no future state, as well as against the Gnostics.

1. He wrote to the unprejudiced, to caution them against the seduction of others.

4. It is possible that by this language the apostle might not mean *unbelievers*, but the Gnostics, since they believed the future state to commence to each individual at the time of his death, and probably denied that there would be any such *second coming of Christ*, or *day of general judgment*, as other christians expected. But then his inference from their opinions would not be just,

just, because the Gnostics had as firm a belief in a future state of retribution as any christians. They had, therefore, the same motive to a virtuous life. In strictness this language of the apostle can only apply to the profligate unbelievers in christianity.

5. Strictly speaking, no person can be wilfully ignorant ; but under strong prejudices they may be so indisposed to receive the truth, that no evidence of it will make a suitable impression upon them. They may even refuse to give any attention to it.

7. As the world was once destroyed by a flood, there is no reason to believe that it will continue for ever in its present state. It may, therefore, be destroyed by fire, or any other means. But the language of the apostle in this place is probably figurative, and only descriptive of those great changes in the state of the world which will precede the second coming of Christ, and the commencement of his proper kingdom. Neither our Saviour, nor Paul, nor John in the Revelation, tho' they speak of the day of judgment, and sometimes much at large, make any mention of a *conflagration*. John says there will be *new heavens and a new earth*, which is the very language used by Peter, in this place ; and to make way for them he says, that *the old heavens and the old earth passed away, and no place was found for them*. Since, therefore, the final result was the same, according to both these apostles, the means that led to it were probably the same in the ideas of them both, tho' they use different figures of speech.

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The apostle here could not mean that the *heavens* would really be *on fire*, tho' he uses that language. Since this, therefore, must be a figurative expression, we may suppose that the same language applied to the *earth* is figurative also. Both the prophet Isaiah, and our Saviour, make use of language highly figurative in describing the same event, and tho' not the very same with this of Peter, it approaches very near to it. Isaiah says, Ch. xxxiv. 4. *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down.* And our Saviour says, Matt. xxiv. 29. *The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* The idea of a total dissolution of the present system is common to them all, tho' their language, (in all highly figurative,) be not exactly the same.

14. Whatever there may be of figure in the language of the apostle, the inference which he draws from the plain truth is in the highest degree important. If the great event is to take place, the distance of the time, or the uncertainty with respect to the time, should have no weight with us. We should in the language of our Saviour, consider it as *near, even at the door.* He gave many earnest admonitions to this purpose.

15. Instead of taking advantage of a delay of judgment, we ought to acknowledge the kindness of God in it ; since it is giving us a longer space for repentance. To this purpose are several passages in the epistles of Paul, as Rom. ii. 4. *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of*

God leadeth thee to repentance. We have here a valuable testimony to the authenticity and excellence of Paul's epistles, and from this it appears that they were generally known and read by christians in that early period. The word *all* implies that a considerable number of them if not all that we now have were then extant.

16. *Treating of this subject.* W.

This approbation of Peter extends to all the epistles of Paul that were written before this of his own which were probably all he wrote. What these things were that were *hard to be understood*, in the writings of Paul, does not appear; but it is sufficiently evident that, in the opinion of Peter, they were *many*; and it is very possible they might be perverted to a bad purpose, as indeed any writings may, even the acknowledged scriptures themselves, as Peter here observes. Peter does not say that Paul treats of this particular subject in all his epistles, but that in all his epistles, in some of which he treats of it, there are things hard to be understood, and which had been thus perverted.

We see that Peter classes the writings of Paul in some sense or other with the *scriptures*, all of which were written by prophets, and contain important truths. But for this purpose it was not necessary that they should be written by a direct inspiration, the divine being superintending every word that dropped from their pen. The occasion did not require this, and there are several passages especially in the writings of Paul, in which he expressly says that he wrote from himself, without any superior direction.

NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO

J O H N.

EVERY thing written by the apostle John was late in his life, and he lived to a great age, chiefly at Ephesus, after the Jewish war. His gospel, if not his epistle, was written at the importunity of christians, who, as he was the last of the apostles, were desirous of having some written memorial of what he had taught them : and that this was the case is probable from the style and contexture of his writings, in which there is the greatest simplicity imaginable, and no trace of any thing belonging to the art of composition. What he wrote was solely from the heart, and without any attention to method.

There never was any doubt with respect to the genuineness of any thing ascribed to this apostle, except the *Revelation*, the style of which was thought to be considerably different from that of his other writings, tho' not more so than the difference of the subjects made necessary.

The principal object of all the writings of John was to oppose the opinions of the Gnostics, and especially the *Docetæ*, who maintained that Jesus was only a man in appearance, that he had no real flesh or blood, and consequently that he never felt any pain. He also inculcates in the most affectionate manner the christian duty of

brotherly love, and exhorts to the practice of virtue in general. This first epistle is supposed to have been written about A. D. 80.

Having principally in view to oppose the opinions of the Gnostics, who held that Christ was only man in appearance, the apostle begins with declaring in the most express manner possible, from the evidence of his senses, seeing, hearing, and even handling, that this opinion was false. By *life* and *eternal life*, it is evident that John means *the person of Jesus*, who taught that doctrine, because he speaks of *seeing* and *handling* this life. The term *life* was one of the favourite phrases of the Gnostics, and probably applied by them to Christ.

The object of the apostle's writing was to withdraw his fellow christians from all fellowship with the Gnostics, who then held separate assemblies, and to unite them more closely to those who were called the Catholic Church; assuring them that God the father, and Jesus Christ, were with them, and not with the Gnostics.

7. The Gnostics were from the beginning charged with licentious practices, and every thing sinful is figuratively termed *darkness*, and virtue and goodness *light*, in the scriptures. Thus Solomon says, *The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; but the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble.*

In saying that the blood of Christ cleanses from sin, the apostle alludes to the Jewish sacrifices, in which blood was used to make atonement. His meaning is that the true christian is free, or endeavours to free himself

himself from all sin, which was not the case with the Gnostics.

9. Here we see that the forgiveness of sin depends on something to be done by ourselves, viz. repentance and reformation.

10. According to the scriptures, as well as universal experience, all men are sinners, and therefore have need of repentance and pardon.

Ch. II. In this part of the epistle the apostle addresses his disciples according to their different ages, or their standing in the christian church, exhorting them in the most affectionate manner to universal virtue, and especially to brotherly love.

1. This language of the apostle well suited his great age. The term *advocate* corresponds to *patron* with the Romans, under whose protection the *client* had put himself; so that he was expected to take his part in general, to speak to his character in a court of justice, and if necessary to plead for him.

8. The old commandment is probably the doctrine of universal virtue, on which he had dwelt, and the new commandment was the principle of that peculiar brotherly love which from the stress that Jesus laid upon it may be called his own commandment, and the evidence of our relation to him. By this he said shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you love one another.

11. By light we are to understand the clear knowledge of the gospel, and by darkness such evil principles and habits as may be said to darken the mind and

prevent our seeing things in their true light, and acting accordingly.

There is much apparent tautology in this part of the epistle. Dr. Doddridge conjectures that if it was all written by the apostle, part of it was only a change of the expression from intending to cancel that which corresponds with it. He would therefore leave out the greatest part of the thirteenth verse.

14. Here the apostle distinguishes his disciples into three classes, children, young men, and old men, and addressed to each what peculiarly suits them.

The language of this apostle is peculiarly figurative, and withal very abrupt, so that there is much difficulty in ascertaining the precise ideas that passed in his mind. I shall however attempt it in the following

P A R A P H R A S E.

My dear young converts, the design of my addressing you in this manner is to prevent your falling into sin ; but as this cannot be wholly avoided, I would observe that the gospel provides a remedy for sin. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and especially to call sinners to repentance, which is the only sure way to forgiveness. By this interposition he acts the part of an advocate, bringing us to God, and restoring you to his favour ; so that he may in his death be compared to the sacrifices under the law, after offering which the offender might again approach the divine presence ; and he acts this part not only with respect to us, but the whole world, which, sinful as it is, he desires to reconcile

concile to God. And by this we know that we are thus reconciled to God, and admitted to friendship with him; if we keep his commandments. He who pretends to be in friendship with God, and does not keep his commandments, deceives himself, or others. But whosoever keeps his commandments discovers a true love of God, and ensures his love of him. By this we have communion or friendship with him. But he who says he is a christian, or in the language of our Saviour, *united to him*, ought to follow his example.

This doctrine of universal obedience, as a test of love to God, is not new. It is contained in the law of Moses; but I shall proceed to a precept which, from the peculiar stress that Jesus laid upon it, may be said to be new, and yet its importance may be depended upon for uniting us to Christ, and suitable to the most perfect dispensation of the gospel; compared to the superior light of which all that preceded it may be called darkness. This is an ardent love of the brethren. This is so essential to the gospel, that if any person pretend to a knowledge of it, and hateth his brother, he may be said to walk in darkness, not able to see his way before him.

My young converts, you know that at your baptism you were informed that it was an emblem of repentance and remission of sin. You who are christians of longer standing, must be acquainted with the doctrine of Christ on this and every other subject. As persons in the prime and vigour of life, you have overcome temptation to sin. Again I say, you who are children, must at least have known your *father*, who is God.

You who are old in the faith must have known *him* long. And you who I compare to young men must be strong, and by the power of the gospel, in which you are well instructed, have resisted temptation; and let me exhort you firmly to retain those generous principles.

Be not attached to the world, or the things of it, for if you be, you cannot at the same time love God, and make his will the rule of your conduct. If you make the things which the world tempts you with, the chief object of your pursuit, things that please the eye, and the other senses, you class yourselves with the friends of the world, and not with the friends of God. For these are opposite to one another; as our Saviour said, *We cannot love God and mammon*. But the folly of giving the preference to the world is manifest from this, that the world and every thing in it is of short continuance, and cannot be enjoyed long, whereas we look beyond this world to its great author, and making his will the rule of our conduct, secure a happiness that will never fail us.

Here the apostle exhorts to a steadfast adherence to the true principles of the gospel, and a conduct suitable to it, from the consideration of its being the *last time*, in which Anti-Christ was to appear.

18. It is very probable that the appearance of the Gnostics, whom the apostles considered as the enemies of Christ and the gospel, confirmed them, and the pre-nitive christians in general, in the idea of their times being those which in the scriptures are termed *the last*, a time of great degeneracy and departure from the true principles.

principles of the gospel, which would soon be succeeded by the second coming of Christ, in the clouds of heaven.

19. This must refer to the Gnostics, who alone in those times held assemblies separate from other christians, who from this circumstance obtained the appellation of *heretics* or *schismatics*.

20. This must not be understood of every thing without exception. But the apostle presumed that these christians, having received the gift of the spirit, and being well instructed in the principles of christianity, were sufficiently apprized of what he had mentioned.

22. By *liars* is not always to be understood persons who tell known falsehoods, but those who maintained what was in fact false, and contrary to the gospel, tho' perhaps through mistake. But the apostles ascribed every thing that was bad to these Gnostics. By denying that *Jesus was the Christ*, they did not deny the divinity of his mission; but they held such opinions concerning him, as were very erroneous, and tended to make the christian doctrine less efficacious.

26. It is evident from this, that the great object of this epistle was to guard the christians against the Gnostic teachers.

29. By *him that is righteous*, must in this place be understood God, tho' Christ be the immediate antecedent in the preceding verse, because christians are never called the *Sons of Christ*, or said to be *born of him*. But all good men are called the *Sons of God*, and are said

to be *born of God*, and in the first verse of the next chapter the same figure is resumed, and expressly applied to the Father.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I must inform you, my younger converts, that we live in what are emphatically called the *last times*, in which according to the prophecies of Daniel, confirmed by our Saviour, and also by revelations made to myself, and others, there will arise a power hostile to the gospel, and which may therefore be called *Anti Christ*. Now there are already many persons of this character, so that it is evident we are come to those times. They have separated themselves from us, but this shews that they never were worthy members of our churches, for if they had been in perfect union with us, they would never have left us.

But I need not inform you of this. For having received the gifts of the spirit of God, you must be well acquainted with it. Indeed if you had not been of the true christian church, I should not have written to you at all ; but being christians you must know that nothing that is false in itself can appertain to us who are the true church of Christ. Now they must be deceived, and belong to Anti-Christ, who deny that Jesus is the Christ. In effect, they deny both the Father who declared Jesus to be his Son, by a voice from heaven, as well as Jesus himself, who always assumed that character. For they who do not acknowledge this character in Jesus cannot have faith in God, who declared him to be his Son.

But

But do you adhere to the doctrine which I have always taught you. Holding this faith, you will be of the true church, which is in communion with the Father and the Son, and will be heirs of that eternal life which Jesus promised to his faithful followers. In this epistle I write to guard you against the seduction of the Gnostic teachers : but as you have received the holy spirit, these admonitions might have been spared. You must have a perfect knowledge of every thing relating to christianity. I only exhort you to persevere in the true faith, that when Christ shall return, you may not be ashamed of your profession, whatever you may suffer in consequence of it here. God, who is righteous himself, will acknowledge all who are righteous to be his children.

CH. III. Having spoken of christians as *born of God*, the apostle treats more at large of the privileges and duties of the children of God, and of the obligation which this relation to him brings men under to a holy life.

1. Knowledge, when applied to God, signifies approbation and attachment. So when it is said that the world knows not God, or knows not christians, the meaning is that they have no cordial affection for one another. Thus Jesus said of the Jews, that they did *not know his Father*, but that he did, because he did the things that were pleasing in his sight.

2. In the latter part of this verse the apostle by *him* means Christ, as is evident from his saying that *he shall appear*, tho' the immediate antecedent is God ; so little attention did he give to accuracy of composition.

7. He

7. He supposed that the principles of the Gnostics led to wickedness ; for by *deceivers* he could not mean any other persons.

9. By *sin* is here meant wilful habitual sin, not every offence against the laws of God. For he himself says that *if any man says that he has no sin, he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him.*

15. He is actuated by the same principles that lead even to murder.

17. A true principle of benevolence will shew itself in beneficent actions.

20. If we know that we entertain any criminal intention, it cannot be concealed from God, who knows us even better than we know ourselves.

22. That is, whatever is fit and proper for us.

24. By this the apostle might mean to say that the Catholic christians, having the gift of the spirit, and the Gnostics not, they had that evidence of their faith being the right one. These gifts of the spirit being only imparted by the apostles, the Gnostics could not possibly have them. That the apostle does here allude to the Gnostics, appears by his more directly alluding to them in the first verse of the next chapter.

THE PARAPHRASE.

How great must have been the love of God to us, when he raised us to the honours and privileges of his sons. But in consequence of this the world, lying in wickedness, and therefore not in friendship with God, will not be in friendship with us. But this ought not to give us any concern, considering what a state of glory

ry and happiness is reserved for us. This we cannot fully comprehend at present, but when Christ, who is in a still higher sense the son of God, and our elder brother, shall appear, we shall share in his glory; for we shall be like him. With this great prospect, we must, while we are here, endeavour to be free from sin, as he was, that we may have a just title to share in his honours. An addictedness to sin will exclude us from this relationship to Christ. For sin is a violation of the law of God to which he strictly conformed. He was not only sinless himself, but the great object of his mission was to make others so. His true disciples, therefore, must renounce all iniquity, otherwise they cannot be in fellowship with him.

This is a subject with respect to which you ought to be particularly guarded against any error. None but the righteous can be in fellowship with him who was so eminently righteous as Jesus was. Wicked men, so far from being his disciples, and the sons of God, may be said to be the children of the devil, the original author of sin; whereas Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, or evil of every kind. A true child of a holy God cannot be a sinful man. The children of God and those of the devil, are distinguished by their different characters; the former only being actuated by a principle of universal virtue and brotherly love. On no one precept did Christ lay so much stress as on this, of brotherly love; whereas Cain, under the influence of the devil, was so far from loving his brother, that he killed him, and that merely because his brother's

ther's actions were approved of God, and his own not.

Be not surprized, or concerned, if a sinful world hate you. We have no reason to envy their state, ours is so much superior. If we have this principle of brotherly love, we may be said to have passed from a state of death to which they are subject, and shall partake with Christ in eternal life. If any person be capable of hating his brother, he has the spirit of a murderer, and all such would, no doubt, be excluded from that eternal life which is promised to the disciples of Christ. Since the love of God to us was so great that he gave his Son to die for us, we ought, in return, to do the like, and be ready even to lay down our lives for our brethren. Certainly, however, we should show our love by imparting to them our abundance in this world, for true benevolence is evidenced not by words, but by beneficent actions. By this we may try our principles, and have confidence with respect to our state. If we be not conscious of this principle of benevolence, this defect cannot be concealed from God, who knows us even better than we know ourselves. But if we be truly conscious of this inward principle of virtue, we may be satisfied that we have nothing to fear on the part of God. Nay we shall receive from him whatever is truly good and proper for us. What he now requires of men is to believe in the mission of his Son, and being christians to evidence it by universal benevolence. We shall then have a proper union with God, and shall have the seal of it in the gifts of his spirit, which are
now

now imparted to all true believers by the hands of the apostles.

Ch. IV. In this part of the epistle the apostle, writing from the fulness of his heart, and a sense of the infinite importance of universal virtue, and especially of brotherly love, repeats with very little variation of argument, or indeed of expression, the same precepts that he had urged before.

1. By *spirits* are evidently meant *teachers*, because it is immediately added, *because many false prophets are gone out into the world*, and by *prophets* were meant not always those who foretold future events, but only those who, in imitation of the ancient prophets, exhorted the people.

2. At this time there were only two classes of christians, those who adhered to the simple doctrine of the apostles, who being the greatest majority of christians were termed *catholic*, and the Gnostics, who, scandalized at the idea of the founder of their religion being a mere man, maintained either that he was man only in outward appearance, or that the man Jesus was not the Christ, but another, and a superangelic being who entered into him at his baptism.

4. That is, you have the advantage of the Gnostics, and your cause will triumph over theirs.

8. This is a sublime sentiment, the meaning of which is, that love, or benevolence, is so essential an attribute of the divine nature, that it may be said to constitute its very *essence*, every other moral attribute being only a modification of it. In reality, justice, as well as mercy, is nothing else than goodness, the object of
it

it being the good of the society in which it is exercised.

13. The gifts of the spirit distinguished the Catholic churches from those of the Gnostics.

14. This is equivalent to what the apostle advanced in the beginning of this epistle, in which he said that they had *seen* and *handled* the word of life; so that they could testify that Jesus himself, or the man so called, was the Messiah, or the Son of God, exclusive of any other being that was said to have resided in him:

15. By *dwelling in God, and God in us*, the apostle meant their being the true church of God, which was in fellowship with God and Christ.

18. If we truly love God, and the brethren, we need be under no apprehension whatever of being condemned at the last day.

THE PARAPHRASE.

I have observed that the gifts of the spirit being with us, is an evidence that our cause, and not that of the Gnostics, is that of God. Tho' therefore, they pretend to preach christianity, you are not to respect them on that account. For there are now many teachers of erroneous doctrines among christians. Try them by this test. If they hold that Jesus had real flesh and blood like other men, they are no Gnostics, but of the Catholic church. Otherwise, they are not of the true church of God, but belong to the Anti-Christ, who was

to make his appearance in the world, and is now among us.

You to whom I write are of the true church of God, and should consider yourselves as having the advantage of them; since God who is with us, is more powerful than the world, which is with them. For that they are of the world, is evident from their worldly mindedness, and from the men of the world being their admirers. But we are of God, and the true friends of God are with us. Ours is the spirit of truth, and theirs of error.

Being, then, of the true church of God, let us imitate God in love. For this is his peculiar character, and the only evidence of our friendship with him. His love to us was manifested by sending his Son to preach to us the doctrine of eternal life; and it was the more extraordinary, as it preceded our love to him. While we were in a state of sin, and on that account his enemies, he sent his Son to preach repentance and forgiveness; and in discharging this duty, he was put to death, as if he had been a lamb slain for the propitiation of our sins, to bring us to God.

Since, then, God has thus shewn his love for us, let us love one another. We cannot indeed see God, but if we have this principle of love, we have God himself with us, and may depend upon his affection for us. And we have this external evidence of his love, and approbation, that we have with us the gifts of his spirit. And we apostles are able to bear witness to the mission of his Son for the salvation of the world. We can bear witness that Jesus himself, without any superangelic

spirit residing in him, is Christ, the Son of God. And we who acknowledge this truth are of the true church of God. We are witnesses of this instance of divine love, which was so great, that we may say *God is love*. It is his primary attribute, and every person who is actuated by the same principle of love, is one with him. If we have this perfect love, we may be confident that we shall be approved of God at the last day, because we perfectly resemble him. In this case we need not entertain any fear of condemnation. If there be any cause of fear, it must arise from a deficiency in love.

To engage us the more to love God, we must ever bear in mind, that his love to us was the cause of our love to him. This love of God will necessarily produce love to our brethren. It is, indeed, impossible that any man should truly love God, and hate his brother; the love of our brother, whom we see, and have familiar intercourse with, being a much easier attainment than the love of God, whom we cannot see. However, independently of any reason, we are fully authorized to say, that he who truly loves God will not be deficient in love to his christian brethren.

Ch. V. The apostle concludes this epistle with the same earnest exhortations to good works, the same cautions against the doctrines of the Gnostics, but in the same immethodical manner, that appears in the preceding parts of it.

6. Some MSS. and versions have, *by water, and blood, and spirit*. W.

As this apostle lays so much stress on his observing both *water* and *blood* flow from the side of Jesus, when he

he was pierced with a spear, which shews that he thought the fact to be of much importance, I doubt not but that it is to the same that he alludes in this place, as an evidence that Jesus was truly a man, and not in appearance only, as many of the Gnostics against whom he wrote maintained. In addition to this evidence from the water and the blood, he alledges that of *the spirit of God*, which at his baptism declared Jesus, the man Jesus, to be the Son of God, or the Christ, which the Gnostics also denied. These different witnesses he observes attested the same thing.

7. The clause which relates to *three other witnesses in heaven, the Father, the word, and the holy spirit*, has been abundantly proved to be spurious. It is not to be found in any MSS. of the Greek Testament, and in the early printed Bibles it was distinguished from the rest as a suspected passage.

10. That is, he feels as complete satisfaction, as if he knew it of himself, without any foreign evidence.

11. This is what Christ came to announce to us from God, that through him he gives to men eternal life.

15. This refers to such answers to prayer as were confined to the age of the apostles, especially the miraculous healing of sick persons, to which James alludes in his epistle.

16. That is, if the sickness be of such a nature as affords a reasonable hope of his recovery; for he intimates that there might be cases in which it would be presumption to expect any interposition of providence

17. In some versions it is, *There is a sin unto death.*

20. That is, Jesus has communicated to us the true doctrine concerning God, as he came *to shew us the Father*, and at the same time to announce to us from him the promise of eternal life to all his faithful followers.

21. As he had said that the christians only were *of God*, and that the heathen world lay in wickedness, he concludes with admonishing his younger converts more especially to avoid all communication with the religious rites of the heathens.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Whosoever, in opposition to the Gnostics, believes that the man Jesus is the Christ, is of the true church, and with all genuine christians of the *Sons of God*; and whoever, as such, is a real lover of the father, will love his children. But the only proper evidence of our love of God is our keeping his commandments, and this is by no means a painful task. All the temptations to vice that the world exhibits, may be overcome by him who has a true love of God, and faith in his promises, and this victory is gained by all sincere christians, who believe that the man Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

That Jesus was really a man, and not in appearance only, was evident from the water and the blood which flowed from his side, when it was pierced with the spear. For not only did water come from the wound, but blood also. The spirit of God, also bore witness to the
same

same truth, that Jesus was the Son of God, at his baptism, and the testimony of the spirit may surely be relied on. There are, therefore, three things that bear the same testimony to Jesus being the Christ, the spirit at his baptism, and the water and the blood at his crucifixion; and all these three establish the same important truth, the first that Jesus was the Son of God, and the two last that he was truly man. If we scruple to admit the testimony of man, as that of myself, who was present at the crucifixion, we cannot object to that of God, concerning his own Son. Every real christian is as well satisfied of this, as if he was conscious to it of himself.

If we believe not God we charge him with deceiving us, in giving a false testimony concerning his Son. What God has declared is, that through his Son Jesus he gives to us eternal life. Every true christian, and no other person, will attain to this life.

These things I address to you who are christians, that you may be satisfied that you are heirs of this eternal life, and may entertain this belief with the strongest faith and the most lively joy. Another consequence of our faith is our obtaining from God every reasonable request. If, for example, we attend a sick brother, whose disorder, like other evils comes, directly or indirectly, from sin, but not of such a nature as there is reason to think he must die in consequence of it, our prayers may be the means of his recovery; tho' there are, no doubt, cases of such a nature as excludes all hope, and therefore it will be more advisable to forbear such prayers. Every violation of the rules of virtue is

a breach of some law of God, but all are not equally heinous. No true christian, however, will sin wilfully, and habitually. And a true child of God will not yield to the snares of the Devil ; and we who are of the true church, know that we are of the family of God, while the world in general lies in wickedness. We also know that Christ came to communicate to us the true knowledge of his Father, and as we have fellowship with him, we have the same with the Father also, who is the true God ; and by this means we attain to eternal life. Since, as I have observed, christians alone are of the family of God, and the heathen world lies in wickedness, the enemies of God, and exposed to condemnation, let me conclude with earnestly admonishing my younger converts to abstain as becomes christians, from every thing that belongs to the heathen worship, whatever they may suffer in consequence of it.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

J O H N.

THESE two smaller epistles of John we supposed to have been written between A. D. 80. and 90. Both the subjects and the language are so much the same with those of the former epistle, that there cannot
be

be a doubt of their having the same author. This second epistle is supposed by some to have been addressed to a church, but by others to a particular woman of eminence in the church; her name according to some being *Eluta*, and according to others *Kuria*. That it was addressed to a particular woman, I think much the most probable, and which of these two words, was the name, and which the epithet, or whether both of them be not epithets, is of little consequence.

Ch. I. 1. That is *the true, and beloved Son of God*.

There is much of dignity and modesty in the apostle calling himself *an elder*. It was the title assumed by Peter in his epistle.

4. By *walking in the truth*, there cannot well be a doubt but that this apostle, whose principal object in writing was to oppose the Gnostic heresy, meant their adhering to the catholic church.

7. This precisely marks the Gnostics, who said that Jesus and the Christ were different persons, or that Jesus had not real flesh, but only the form of a human body, not subject to pain or death.

9. Christ and the Father being in strict union, a separation from the true church of Christ is a separation from the Father, and an union with it, is an union with both.

11. The apostle could hardly have expressed his disapprobation of the Gnostics more strongly than in this manner. It was the practice of the Jews with respect to the persons whom they excommunicated.

13. This language is much more natural concerning a particular person, than a church. One of the sisters

probably resided where the apostle did, and the others to whom the epistle is addressed, at some distance.

NOTES ON THE THIRD EPISTLE OF J O H N.

THIS third epistle of John is addressed to a person of the name of *Gaius*, or *Caius*, who must have been a respectable and wealthy member of some church in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, where the apostle resided, and of which Diotrephes was the bishop.

This may be rendered *in all respects*, as well as *above all things*.

4. By *walking in the truth*, no doubt this apostle meant adhering to the catholic church, and not joining the Gnostics.

8. The persons who had been entertained by this Gaius must have been some who, like the apostle Paul, preached among the Gentiles, and bore their own expenses so that they had the more reasonable claim to the rights of hospitality when they met with christians.

10. We see how soon a haughty overbearing spirit got into the christian church, but knowing so little of the circumstances of this particular case, we can not say

say what degree of blame attached itself to the conduct of this Diotrephes. The apostle evidently thought it highly reprehensible. By *casting out of the church* is probably meant in this place his refusing to receive these strangers, and thereby compelling them to apply to other churches for relief. The custom of excommunicating persons who did not belong to the church in which the excommunication was pronounced, did not begin so early; and the receiving and entertaining strangers, tho' it might be deemed unnecessary, will never be deemed a plausible ground of excommunication at any time.

12. This Demetrius was probably the person who carried this epistle.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF

J U D E.

THIS epistle of Jude was probably written on the same occasion, and about the same time, with the second of Peter, being evidently designed to guard christians against the principles and practices of the Gnostics. We know but little concerning this apostle, but that he was otherwise called *Lebberus* and *Thaddeus*, that he was the brother of that James, who is called the brother of Jesus, and that they were the sons

sons of *Alpheas*, or *Cleopas*. Where this apostle lived, or how he died, we are not informed, but probably he continued in some part of Judea till the breaking out of the war.

3. Here we clearly see, that the object of this epistle was to preserve the christians in their adherence to the proper church of Christ, established by the apostles, in opposition to others who made innovations, and these we know were in those times the Gnostics only. All the characters by which he describes those whose opinions or practices he censures, were either avowedly maintained by them, or generally ascribed to them.

4. At first the Gnostics were, of course, members of the common christian churches. But afterwards, in consequence of holding opinions very different from those of other christians, it was found convenient for them to form separate societies and it is probable that this was at first voluntary on their part: for they are said to be those who *separated themselves*. They were charged not only with holding erroneous opinions, which was certainly true of them, with respect to the person of Jesus, as has often been explained; but with practices of the most flagitious nature. That some of them were guilty of such vices is very credible, because there are unworthy members of all societies; but that the tenets of the Gnostics necessarily led to vice does not appear. Like other christians, they expected a future state of righteous retribution, tho' not in the body, and professing to hate and mortify the body, they would rather avoid all sensual indulgences; tho' it is possible that their contempt of the body might be so great

great, and its connection with the soul in their opinion so little, and only temporary, that they might think that the pollution of the body would not remain with the soul. This contrary effect of similar principles has been seen in some more modern sects of christians.

5. As the Hebrews, 'tho' delivered from their bondage in Egypt, died in the wilderness for their unbelief, the apostle warns christians against a similar conduct and a similar fate, if they should depart from the true faith of the gospel.

6. By the *angels who left their first estate*, are probably to be understood, as I observed in the notes on the second epistle of Peter, those who are called the *sons of God* in the antediluvian world, and who perished in the general deluge.

The words of Jude are, word for word, the same with those in the *book of Enoch*, which was seen by Mr. Bruce in Abyssinia. *Travels*, p. 499

8. This should rather have been rendered *vain dreamers*, alluding to the wild speculative systems of the Gnostics, in which there was much of fancy and suppositions of the most improbable kind, on which account Paul calls them *endless genealogies*, and *old wives' fables*. The first Gnostics were Jews, strongly prejudiced in favour of the law, which they wished to impose on the Gentile converts. They also ill brooked their subjection to the Romans.

9. This is probably an allusion to a passage in Zechariah iii. 2; as was observed in the notes on II. Peter.

12. It

12. It should have been rendered *bidden rocks*, on which ships are dashed before mariners are aware of them.

13. There was hardly any vice or excess with which these Gnostics were not accused.

15. This must have been an antient tradition among the Jews, and it is by no means improbable in itself. To have been translated to heaven without dying, Enoch must have distinguished himself by his zeal in the cause of virtue and of God ; and his translation might be considered as a confirmation of his doctrine, and especially a proof of the reality of *another state*, to which men passed after they had done with this. For it would not be supposed that he was taken up into the clouds that he might die there, or elsewhere. And the power that could remove a man from this state to that without dying, would easily be supposed to be able to do it after death. It is not improbable, therefore, but that Enoch was the first to whom the doctrine of a future state was distinctly revealed, tho' we have not now any sufficient evidence of it.

18. The appearance of the Gnostics was thought by Paul, Peter and John, as well as Jude, to be an indication that their's were the times in which there was to be a great departure from the true faith, and a proportionable corruption of morals ; so that, according to our Saviour's prophecies, his second coming would be wholly unexpected, and a dreadful surprize to the world. But it is evident now that the real *apostacy of the latter times*, tho' in some respects similar to that of the Gnostics,

tics, was that of the church of Rome ; for in it we find all the genuine characters of anti-christ.

19. That the Gnostics had not the gifts of the Spirit was alledged by the apostle John, as a proof that their's was not the true church of Christ.

23. As the garments of persons infested with the plague cannot be handled with safety, so the catholic christians were exhorted to avoid every thing that bore the least relation to the Gnostics.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF

REVELATION

THIS book of Revelation, I have no doubt, was written by the apostle John, and probably about A. D. 96, after he had been banished to the isle of Patmos by the emperor Domitian. Sir Isaac Newton with great truth, says, he does not find any other book of the New Testament so strongly attested, or commented upon, so early as this. Indeed, I think it impossible for any intelligent and candid person to peruse it without being struck in the most forcible manner with the peculiar dignity and sublimity of its composition, superior to that of any other writing whatever ; so as to be convinced that, considering the age in which it appeared, none but a person divinely inspired could have written it. Also, the numerous marks of genuine piety

that

that occur through the whole of this work will preclude the idea of imposition, in any person acquainted with human nature. It is, likewise, so suitable a continuation of the prophecies of Daniel, that something would have been wanting in the New Testament dispensation if nothing of this kind had been done in it. For it has been the uniform plan of the divine proceedings to give a more distinct view of interesting future events as the time of their accomplishment approached.

Besides, notwithstanding the obscurity of many parts of this book, enough is sufficiently clear ; and the correspondence of the prophecy with the events so striking, as of itself to prove its divine origin. Indeed, some of the most interesting parts of this prophecy are at this very time receiving their accomplishment, and therefore our attention is called to it in a very particular manner ; tho' it certainly was not the intention of divine providence to enable us, by means of these predictions to foretel particular future events, or to fix the exact time of their accomplishment.

It is, indeed, sufficient for us, and affords us much consolation, that the great catastrophe is clearly announced, and such indications of the approach of happy times, as lead us to look forward with confidence and joy. These prophecies are also written in such a manner as to satisfy us, that the events announced to us were really foreseen ; being described in such a manner as no person writing without that knowledge could have done. This requires such a mixture of clearness and obscurity as has never yet been imitated by any forgers of prophecy whatever. Forgeries, written of course
after

after the events, have always been too plain. It is only in the scriptures, and especially in the book of Daniel, and this of the Revelation, that we find this happy mixture of clearness and obscurity in the account of future events.

Ch. I. 1. This verse furnishes sufficient proof that Christ is not God. The predictions in this book were such as God imparted to him, not what he knew of himself. The term *shortly*, and other equivalent expressions are sometimes used to denote *certainly*; and if any event will certainly come to pass, it is, in the eye of God, as if it was present. Thus when our Saviour said to the penitent thief, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*, he meant nothing more than that they would certainly meet there. The prophecies in this book extend to the day of judgment, whenever that will be; and seventeen hundred years are already elapsed since the book was written.

By *angel* may be understood any medium, or instrument by which the divine will is signified to us. It does not appear that any angel was employed here besides those that are mentioned in the course of the visions.

3. By keeping the things that are written in this book must be meant, keeping clear of those corruptions which are here foretold to take place in the church.

4. There must, at this time, have been more churches in Asia than *seven*; but these were probably the most considerable, as the number *seven* may be used in correspondence with the other sevens in this book; so the *seven spirits* that are before the throne, is probably

bly synonymous to what is elsewhere called the *boly spirit*, denoting perhaps the abundance of his gifts.

5. This should have been rendered the *faithful martyr*. It is the same word that is so rendered when it is afterwards applied to Antipas, who was *faithful unto death*.

Jesus being here called *the prince of the kings of the earth*, probably refers to the dignity to which he will be advanced when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and of Christ, and he shall reign for ever, other princes being in some sense under him.

By *washing us from our sins in his own blood*, is to be understood, that by his death and resurrection that religion, by which the world is reformed, is established. Clemens Alexandrinus says, that by his *blood* is meant his *doctrine*.

6. Whatever be the glory to which Christ will be advanced in his proper kingdom, there are many intimations given that his faithful followers will share with him in it. This was sufficiently expressed by himself, when he said that his twelve apostles should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and when he said John xvii, 22. that the *glory* which God had given to him, he had given to his disciples. According to Daniel, Ch. vii, 27, this kingdom will be given *to the people of the saints of the most high*, and not to a single person. When Paul said the *saints shall judge the world*, he must have meant they will attain to princely power, *judging* being one branch of it.

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7. The compunction with which the Jewish nation will behold this great event is particularly described by Zechariah xii. 10. *They shall call on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born.* It was probably to this passage that John here alludes.

10. To be *in the spirit*, means being under a divine impression. He was probably in an extacy, so that no other person, tho' he had been present, would have seen, or heard, what he describes. It appears from this that the first day of the week had at this time got the appellation of *the Lord's day*, by way of distinction from the other days of the week, and that particular respect was paid to it.

11. The words *I am alpha and omega, the first and the last*, are not in the best MSS. or antient versions.

This alludes to Is. xli. 4, where God says, *Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me*, and ch. xliv. 6, *I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.*

16. Our Saviour is here represented as in the holy place, behind the golden candlesticks that were in the temple; but the scenery is not exact. For in the temple there were *ten* candlesticks, and in the tabernacle *only one*. This description of his appearance is calculated to impress the mind with the greatest reverence; but that it is only an emblematical representation, proper for a vision, and not the appearance that Jesus will actually make hereafter, may be inferred from the

sword proceeding out of his mouth, and the seven stars in his right hand. It was customary, however, for soldiers to carry their swords in their mouths when they could not make any immediate use of them. Thus we read of Turks boarding a vessel, with their swords in their mouths, ready for use when they should have got into the vessel they endeavoured to make a prize of.

17. Instead of *the first*, one MSS. has *the first horn*. But the appellation applies with sufficient accuracy to Jesus, who in his humility appeared in the lowest state of human wretchedness, and in his exaltation the first of the human race, *the prince of the kings of the earth*.

18. This figure is peculiarly expressive, implying that God has put it in his power to raise from the grave and to give eternal life to whom he pleases.

By the *things that are*, is probably meant the messages to the seven churches in the two next chapters, after which come the predictions of what is *future*.

20. We may infer from this account of Jesus walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, which represent the churches, but more clearly from his messages to the seven churches in the two next chapters, as well as from several circumstances in the Acts of the apostles, that he is at this time present with his churches in this world, tho' invisible, and also employed, tho' in a manner of which we have no knowledge.

CH. II., There is an uncommon solemnity and dignity in the messages of Jesus to the seven churches, contained in these two chapters, exceeding any thing even in the sacred writings. It is not possible to read them with

with attention without the strongest emotions. They express the very great interest that he takes in the state of the churches, his earnest desire for their improvement, and the most solemn warnings against any failure in their duty. This could never have been thought of, nor could it have been counterfeited, by an impostor.

The *angel* in this place means the presiding officer, or bishop of the church, but not a diocesan bishop, who had the care of other churches besides his own.

2. Here is probably an allusion to the Gnostics, who are called *liars*, or enemies of truth, in the epistle of John.

5. This awful threat has been fulfilled with respect to all these churches of Asia; there being hardly a vestige of true christianity in any of them.

6. The *Nicolaitans* were a division of the Gnostics. What were their peculiar tenets, or practices, is not certainly known; but besides holding absurd tenets, they are by all the antients charged with impure practices.

7. Each of these epistles closes with a promise to the obedient, expressed in very peculiar language, all different from one another and unlike any thing else in the New Testament, or the Old. But, bold as the figures are, they are, in general, sufficiently intelligible. From the *tree of life* Adam, for his transgression, was excluded, but as by our faith in the gospel, and our obedience to the precepts of it, we secure a happy immortality, we may be said to gain access to this tree

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of life again. It is observable that whatever Jesus addresses to these churches he does it as from the spirit, and not from himself.

9. Here, I doubt not, is another allusion to the Gnostics, who in this time were in general speculating Jews, but according to our Saviour unworthy of the name.

10. *Ten days* expresses a considerable, but a limited time. Some, however, tho' I think without reason, suppose that this is an allusion to the *ten persecutions* of the christians by the Romans.

11. The *second death*, is an allusion to the same language in the latter part of this book, where some explanation will be given of it. The phrase occurs in no other part of the New Testament.

12. Christ being represented with a sword coming out of his mouth, to which he here alludes, is an intimation that he is possessed of the power of punishing his enemies, as well as of rewarding his friends.

13. This circumstance of the martyrdom of Antipas shows that this book was not written before the persecution of the christians by the Romans. We have no account of this Antipas in church history, but his name is in the book of life.

14. Here again is an allusion to the tenets and practices of the Gnostics, such as Paul noticed in the church of Corinth, where some maintained that there was no harm in partaking of feasts in honour of idols, and even eating at the sacrifices in the temples of the heathen gods. Fornication was countenanced, and indeed required, in several of the heathen festivals; and, as we
learn

learn from the epistles of Paul, it was by no means regarded with sufficient abhorrence by several of the newly converted christians.

15. It should seem from this that the doctrine of the Nicolaitans was something different from that which is called the *doctrine of Balaam*; but ecclesiastical history throws no light on the subject. There were many sects of the Gnostics distinguished from each other by peculiar denominations.

17. This *hidden manna*, is a phrase of the same import with the language of Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum, when he speaks of *living bread*, implying the gift of eternal life. The *white stone* is an allusion to the tickets that were given at the Grecian games, on which were written the names of the conquerors, and the prizes to which they were entitled. A *white stone* was also the token of acquittal in some of their courts of justice. But to what the *name* upon it alludes is uncertain.

20. This must have been some woman of note in the church, who patronized the Gnostic doctrines above mentioned. Being a woman, she is called *Jezebel*, in allusion to the wife of Ahab, who introduced the worship of Baal into the kingdom of Israel.

23. This must refer to some exemplary judgment in this world, which therefore seems to imply that Jesus has the power of inflicting such punishments even now. It shews, at least, that this language may be used by him, tho' the meaning should only be that, as in the case of the antient prophets, he denounced these judgments by authority from God, and therefore that, in

the prophecies of Daniel we are at liberty to read *the Messiah will cut off*, as well as *will be cut off*, if we think the sense in other respects requires that rendering.

24. What is here meant by *burden* does not appear. The four injunctions which the apostles laid on the Gentile christians are called *burdens*, and perhaps it is to this that Jesus here alludes.

27. This refers to the power that will be given to Christ and his followers in a future state ; when, as we read in Daniel, *the saints of the most high shall possess the kingdom*.

28. We read in Daniel, that the righteous shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, and to this Jesus might allude, tho' the idea does not seem well expressed by putting the stars themselves into their possession.

Ch. III. This chapter contains the messages of Jesus to the remaining churches of Asia.

3. This seems to refer to some temporal judgments, tho' the language is the same that our Saviour used with respect to his final coming to judge the world. If so, we may infer from it, that the direction of the affairs of the church, is now in some sense in the hands of Christ, tho' his interposition does not appear.

4. *White* was always worn on occasions of great joy and triumph.

7. To have the *keys* of a house implies having the chief power in it, or that of a steward.

Mr. W. renders, *The possessor of the key, the son of David*.

10. This probably refers to the persecution by Trajan, but history does not inform us whether this particular church was exempt from it, or not. This promise and the threat in Ch. ii, 5, of removing the candlestick out of its place in the church of Ephesus, are circumstances which seem to imply that the administration of the affairs of the church is now in the hands of Christ. Most of the other promises and threatenings in this epistle refer, at least with most probability, to a future state of things, after his second coming.

12. This is an allusion to inscriptions on pillars, which were often erected in temples, as memorials of victories, and to the *new Jerusalem*, which, at the close of this book, is said to come down from heaven. By *my new name*, may perhaps be understood my excellent name. Slaves were often marked with the name of their masters.

14. This should have been rendered *martyr*, rather than *witness*, and the *beginning*, or the *chief* of the creation of God ; but the word *witness* better corresponds to the other title *amen*, which was used by way of giving assent or confirmation to something that had been said by others.

This closes the account of the *things that are*, or that were present at the time of writing this book. We now proceed to the things that were then future.

Ch. IV. We are now presented with a new vision that is properly *prophetic*, and the circumstances of it are uncommonly striking, there being nothing equal to it for grandeur and solemnity even in the book of Daniel. I do not, however, see, with Sir Isaac Newton,

son, that the scene of this vision is in a temple, or any building whatever, tho' several of the utensils that were in the temple are mentioned as being here. The scene is in the heavens, into which an opening was made, and the apostle supposed to ascend through it.

3. Nothing is said of the form of the person who sat on the throne, any more than in the vision of Daniel. These precious stones are probably mentioned on account of their lustre, and not for any peculiar qualities of which they were possessed.

4. There seems to be some correspondence between these *twenty four seats*, and the *elders* upon them, and the *twenty four courses* of priests who served in the temple. They seem to occupy the place of prime ministers in the court of heaven.

5. The *seven lamps* which are here said to signify *seven spirits*, probably represent the *seven churches*, or the church universal, angels being supposed to attend upon them. Some think, as observed before, that by the *seven spirits* is meant the same that is generally called the *holy spirit* in the singular number.

6. This seems to correspond to the *brazen sea*, or great *laver* in the temple of Solomon; but whereas that was of brass, this is of transparent crystal. There is no other circumstance in this scenery that looks so like to the temple, and yet the brazen sea was very remote from the supposed place of the throne in the holy of holies, as it was not within the building, but in the open air, in the same court with the altar of burnt offering.

8. These four living creatures seem to be the same with those that are elsewhere called *cherubims*, representing

senting perhaps the angels that are supposed to attend the throne of God. Their form is the same with that of those described by Ezekiel, except that in his description their several heads are represented as united in one body, whereas here they are separate, and therefore rather resemble those that were seen by Isaiah, and called *seraphim*, each having six wings; but nothing is there said of their number, or of their heads, or faces. Both cherubim and seraphim are mentioned in the book of Psalms, as attending the throne of God. Whatever was denoted by them, must have been well understood by the Jews. There were such figures as these in the holy of holies, both in massy statues over the ark, and also carved on the walls. This was no violation of the second commandment, as they were neither to be worshipped, nor resembling any thing in nature, but merely emblematical. The animals here described, each with six wings, and all full of eyes, within and without, are certainly nothing in the compass of nature.

Some think that the figures of these four living creatures were used as standards of the twelve tribes in the wilderness. But there is no mention of any such figures in the writings of Moses, nor is it probable that the Hebrews made use of such figures for the purpose. These living creatures are said to be *round the throne*, and *on the throne*, those that were between the writer and the throne seeming to him to be upon it. Why the cherubim should be represented under these forms, we can only conjecture. The figure of a *lion* is supposed to signify great strength or courage, that of the *ox* firmness, that of a *man* intelligence, and that of the *eagle*,
swiftness

swiftness and activity, qualities peculiarly necessary for those who execute the orders of omnipotence.

11. The hymn of praise being begun by these living creatures, or cherubims, makes it probable that they represent angels; tho' many angels being represented as present is unfavorable to this supposition.

He that sat on the throne was, no doubt, the Supreme Being, the one God and Father of all. He is described as the creator of all things, and therefore the only person to whom divine power could be ascribed.

Ch. V. After a description of the throne of God and his attendants, we are presented in this chapter with a view of a *sealed book*, or *roll*, containing the predictions that are to be unfolded in it, and the preparation made for the opening it.

1. The book was written only *within*, not, as in our translation, both *within* and *on the outside* too; for then part of it at least might have been read, without breaking any seal. There should be a pause after the word *within*, and then we shall read, *and on the outside it was sealed with seven seals*. After opening one of the seals, part of the book might be unrolled, and then another seal (which might appear on the outside of the roll) might prevent any more of it being read.

2. Tho' the nature and employment of angels may be represented by these living creatures, we find other angels independent of them employed in these visions.

3. These are characters of the Messiah in the book of Isaiah, Christ being of the tribe of Judah, who in the prophecy of Jacob is called a *lion*. The prophecy of
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of Isaiah here referred to is Ch. xi, in which there is a very distinct prediction of a time of universal peace, under the government of the Messiah, tho' he does not there bear that name, after the destruction of the wicked, accomplished by him.

6. Tho' Christ be just before described as a *lion*, he here appears in the form of a *lamb*. He has *seven horns* and *seven eyes* to represent his power and his intelligence; which being given him by God are called *the seven spirits of God*, by means of which he will govern the world.

8. The offering of incense, which ascends upwards, is frequently made an emblem of *prayer*, which, as it were, ascends to God.

10. It appears from this, that the twenty four elders represent the church of God, collected out of all nations.

14. Notwithstanding the hymn of praise that was sung to the lamb, jointly with him that sat on the throne, yet when the twenty four elders fell down to *worship*, the worship is only addressed to him that liveth for ever and ever, who being a single person, must be the God and father of all.

Ch. VI. After the preceding solemn and interesting preparation, we come to the account of the opening of the seven seals of the prophetic book, and the emblematical description of the events referred to in each of them.

2. The predictions contained under all these seven seals seem to relate to the Roman empire in its heathen state, because the sixth describes a great revolution,
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which can hardly signify any thing else than the great change that was made in the empire which then comprized the greatest part of the known world, in consequence of the change of its religion, attended, as it necessarily was, with many changes in its civil state also; and as the first seal exhibits a conqueror, after the reign of Domitian, it cannot be any other than Trajan, who carried the Roman empire to its greatest extent; having reduced Dacia and Assyria to the state of Roman provinces, taken possession of Seleucia, and Ctesiphon, principal cities in Persia, and carried his arms very far into Arabia.

4. This is rather a description of a civil war within the empire, than one that extended the bounds of it; and in the latter part of the reign of Trajan, and in that of Adrian, who succeeded him, the Jews revolted, and after committing great ravages, in the course of which they put to death forty six thousand men, they were conquered with great slaughter, losing not less than fifty eight thousand men, and having a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed. Also in the reign of Adrian the Alans committed dreadful ravages in Media, Armenia, and Cappadocia, but retired on the approach of the Roman governor.

The wars of Trajan for the extension of the empire, and these civil wars, which began in the latter part of his reign, are by all commentators referred to the same vial, tho' they are things exceedingly different; as if a seal was to be judged of by length of time, rather than the nature of events. The war which almost exterminated the Jewish nation, and completed their dispersion, which

which continues to this day, was a sufficient object for one of these vials.

6. This represents wheat as dear.

In the reigns of the Antonines, who succeeded Adrian, and that of Commodus, there was a great scarcity of corn, and a famine in consequence of it, together with other great public calamities. It has been observed that tho' no princes ever ruled with more justice and moderation than the Antonines, and they had no wars of any consequence, the empire suffered more from internal causes under them than it had ever done before. Tertullian, who lived in those times, ascribed the unseasonable weather, and frequent bad harvests, to the judgments of God, for the persecution of the christians. The rains were so excessive, that a second general deluge was apprehended. In the reign of Antoninus Pius the scarcity was so great at Rome, that the people attempted to stone him. In that of his successor the Tyber overflowed a great part of Rome, and it was followed by a famine and several earthquakes, the burning of cities, and a prodigious number of insects which destroyed what the floods had spared; so that Aurelius Victor, a heathen writer says, that earthquakes, attended with the destruction of cities, the inundations, frequent pestilences, the locusts, and every evil that could afflict mankind, raged in his reign. In the time of Commodus the people of Rome were so pressed by famine, that they put to death Cleander the emperor's favourite.

According to the price of corn here particularly mentioned, it appears that it must have been excessively dear,

dear, so that the labour of a man (which was usually a denarius, which we improperly render a *penny*, a day) was barely sufficient to purchase *bread* for himself, without leaving any thing for other necessaries, or for his family.

8. This is exactly descriptive of the state of the Roman empire from Maximus to Valerian, in which it suffered by war, famine, and pestilence, more than in any preceding period. These calamities were by the heathens charged to the christians, and by the christians to their persecution by the heathens; but the facts were noticed by all. Zonaras says that "in the reign
" of Gallus the Persians renewed their incursions, and
" settled in Armenia. An almost innumerable multitude of Scythians fell upon Italy, and ravaged Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece. A part of them from
" the Palus Mæotis broke through the Bosphorus into
" the Euxine sea, and laid waste many provinces. Many
" other nations rose against the Romans. Moreover
" a plague at that time infested the provinces, which
" beginning in Ethiopia, spread through both the East
" and the West, destroyed a great proportion of the inhabitants, and continued fifteen years." Zosimus, a heathen historian, takes notice of the same calamity, saying that "while war raged in every part, a pestilence
" spread through all the towns and villages, and destroyed the remainder of mankind, and that there never had been so great a destruction of men in any
" former period." A country depopulated by war or pestilence, will naturally be overrun by *wild beasts*,
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and we read of five hundred wolves entering a particular city that had been deserted by its inhabitants, when young Maximin happened to be in it. By *death* in this place is to be understood pestilence.

11. The christians had suffered much by the persecution in the preceding period, but they suffered much more in that which followed under Dioclesian, which continued without intermission ten years, and extended through the whole of the empire. It was the last and greatest effort of the heathens to exterminate christianity. The *souls* therefore, or the *lives* of the martyrs, are represented as being under the altar, as if they had been sacrificed, and their white robes were the tokens of that victory they had obtained, but their being *under the altar*, and being informed that they must *wait* for their reward, gives us no idea of their being at that time in a state of happiness. In fact it was the state of death, but personified, and therefore they are represented as alive ; as Nebuchadnezzar and other dead kings are personified by Isaiah, when it is evident, from the representation itself, that they were in their graves, incapable of doing, or of enjoying anything.

17. This represents the great revolution that took place in the Roman empire, in consequence of the change in its religion, on the accession of Constantine, and the defeat of his many heathen enemies ; when the consternation of the heathen priests, magistrates, and the people in general, must have been very great. The language in which this is described is highly figurative, but such as is usual with the ancient prophets, when nothing more was intended than changes and revolutions.

ous in states. The prophet Haggai, describing, no doubt, revolutions in kingdoms, represents the Almighty as saying, Ch. ii. 6. *I will shake the heavens and the earth, I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathens.* Isaiah, speaking concerning Babylon, says Ch. xiii, 19. *The stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and, the moon shall not cause her light to shine.* In a similar manner he describes the revolutions that were to take place before the return of the Jews to their own country, Ch. xxxiv. 4. *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as a fulling fig from the fig tree.*

Ch. VII. We now come to the opening of the seventh seal, which includes the sounding of seven trumpets; and each of them contains an emblematical description of some important event, subsequent to the downfall of heathenism in the Roman empire.

1. *This silence in heaven*, may correspond to the considerable state of rest and peace, both in the empire and in the church, after the accession of Constantine.

4. This is an allusion to the temple service, in which the priest, having first taken fire from the great altar, where it was always burning, went to the golden altar, in the holy place, and offered incense. This action is often made an emblem of prayer; ascending like the smoke of incense, especially as while the priest was doing

doing this, the people in the court were engaged in silent prayer, each by himself.

5. This action of the angel seems to be an intimation that the scenes which would open next must be a series of great judgments.

7. A succession of calamities befel the Roman empire after the time of Constantine, so that it is not very easy to distinguish which of them were designed to be announced by the three first trumpets, and accordingly different expositors distribute them differently. But as *three different nations* were the principal authors of these calamities, and by their invasions prepared the way for the overthrow of the Western empire, viz. the *Goths*, the *Vandals*, and the *Huns*, it is not improbable that the three first trumpets relate to those invasions.

The first trumpet therefore, relates to the *Goths*, who under Alaric began their incursions in A. D. 395. Having first ravaged Greece they invaded Italy and laid siege to Rome; and tho' they were bought off at that time, they took and plundered it in A. D. 410. After this, leaving Italy, they settled in Gaul. Philostorgius, who wrote in those times, says that the "sword of the barbarians destroyed the greatest multitude of men, and among other calamities dry heats with flashes of flame, and whirlwinds, occasioned various and intolerable terrors, and that hail-stones larger than could be held in a man's hand fell in several places, weighing as much as eight pounds." Had these hurricanes and hail storms been peculiarly frequent and extensive at this time, there would seem to

be an allusion to them in the language of this prophecy; but such hurricanes and hail storms happen at all times, and their ravages seldom extend far.

8. The preceding plague is represented as falling on the *earth*, whereas this falls on the *sea*. But whether any material difference was intended by this circumstance is uncertain. Since, however, the next great calamity that befel the empire was from the Vandals, they are probably referred to in the second of these trumpets, and this nation entered Gaul, together with the Burgundians and Alans, in A. D. 407. In A. D. 419 they settled in Spain, in A. D. 428, being then commanded by Genferic, they left that country, and took possession of a great part of Africa. In A. D. 439 and 440 they conquered Sicily, and in A. D. 455 Genferic took and plundered Rome.

Many of the countries ravaged by the Vandals, were, no doubt, maritime ones; and on this account the plague may be said to have fallen on the *sea*. About the same time the Saxons infested the northern parts of the empire, making three expeditions by sea; and in A. D. 455, having conquered a great part of Britain, they formed the first of their seven kingdoms, viz. that of Kent. But we do not read of any great destruction of *ships*, so that this prophecy cannot be interpreted literally; and if the language be figurative, we cannot tell how far the figure extends. Since, therefore, the *sea* is said in the prophecy itself to signify a *multitude of people*, and the *earth* must signify its inhabitants, these two emblems, tho' different, may not have been intended

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ed to represent different things. A series of calamities chiefly by war, is all that we are fully authorized to infer from them.

11. After the Goths and the Vandals, the next who ravaged the Roman empire were the Huns; who, after having been expelled from their original seat in Asia, poured with a most destructive torrent into Europe. Commanded by Attila, they proceeded from East to West, and in the space of fourteen years they made more dreadful devastations than had ever been heard of before. In A. D. 425 they ravaged Thrace; thence they proceeded to Macedonia, Greece, and the northern parts of Italy; where, in A. D. 452 they took and destroyed Aquileia, and many other cities, all of which they depopulated and burned without mercy. Attila called himself *the scourge of God and the terror of men*. He made preparations for going to Rome, but was induced to withdraw by the promise of an annual tribute.

It is the more probable that the Huns were intended in the third trumpet, because in it mention is made of a *great star falling from heaven* before the calamity that was occasioned by it on the earth, which implies a fall from a former situation; and these Huns were actually driven from their original seat in Asia before their invasion of Europe. But why this star should be called *wormwood* I do not see, any more than why this calamity should be said to fall on the rivers and fountains of water, rather than on the earth or the sea. It fell, no doubt, on cities situated on great rivers; but so is almost every city of much consequence. Bishop

Newton finds the Vandals in the third trumpet, and the Huns in the second. But tho' Genferic plundered Rome after the Huns invaded Italy, the Vandalic nation, of which he was king, began their ravages in other parts of the empire before the appearance of the Huns.

All these calamities are said to have affected the *third part* of that on which they fell. In the first, which fell on the earth, the third part of the trees and of the grass was burned up. In the second which fell on the sea, the third part of the fishes and of the ships were destroyed; and in the third which fell on the rivers and fountains, the third part of the water became wormwood. But in all these cases nothing more may have been intended than to signify that a great proportion of the people should suffer. Some think that this *third part* means the whole of the Western empire, because Europe was about a third part of what was antiently known of the world; and Mr. Bicheno is of opinion that this third part means one of the *three prefectures* into which the Roman empire was divided after the time of Constantine. But as a third part is said to suffer five different times, the third part of the earth must in some of them be the same with the third part of the sea, or of the rivers, &c. I therefore prefer a more general to a more particular interpretation.

12. This language always denotes a great change of government, the sun moon and stars representing the supreme power in a state. And after the calamities above mentioned an end was put to the Western empire by Odoacer the king of the Heruli, who took the title of king of Italy. He was supplanted by the Goths under

under Theodoric ; and his kingdom being in part destroyed, Rome became subject to the emperors of the East, who governed that part of Italy of which they recovered the possession by an officer called the *Exarch*, who resided at Ravenna, while Rome was only one of the cities under his jurisdiction: Still, however, the city was governed internally by the Senate, and the former magistrates, and it retained much of its former consideration. But only the third part of the sun, &c. was affected, because the Roman empire was still entire in the East, as well as retained much power in Africa, and some parts of the West.

13. The events announced by all the preceding trumpets were exceedingly calamitous but the three last are announced in such a manner as naturally leads us to expect events still more so ; and such, especially with respect to the duration, and extent, we shall find them to be.

Ch. IX. 2. Who is intended by the *star which falls from heaven*, does not appear. That it is a *person*, is evident from the key of the abyss, or bottomless pit, being given to him, and his opening of it. It cannot be Mahomet, as is generally supposed, because if the locusts which issue from this pit be the Saracens, he is one of them, and indeed their principal leader. Besides, if it represent any man at all, it should, according to the analogy of the prophetic language, be one who had fallen from a high station: It is probable, therefore, that it represents some angel, and his *falling* is only his *descending* from heaven to execute the orders of the Almighty.

3. The resemblance between these locusts and the Saracens under Mahomet and his successors is so great, that there cannot well be any doubt of their having been intended in this prophecy. The power of these locusts was to sting and torment men, which is not the natural property of the locust.

4. The properties of natural locusts is farther departed from in this circumstance; for locusts feed on grass and every thing that is green, and on nothing else; but considered as representing the Saracens, (whom they really resembled in nothing but their numbers and their ravages) the likeness is very striking. For the commission that was given to the armies of the Saracens was, not to do any unnecessary mischief to the countries they invaded. The charge that Abubeker, the second caliph, gave to Yezid, who invaded Syria, was not to destroy any palm trees, to burn any fields of corn, or do any mischief to the cattle, except such as they killed for food. They were only to destroy the *idolaters*, wherever they came. Accordingly they almost exterminated the fire worshippers of Persia: and it is remarkable that those parts of the Roman empire which they invaded and conquered were in the most corrupt state with respect to religion, both in theory and practice; and when they approached those parts in which a purer worship prevailed, and better morals, as in the southern parts of France, and the northern parts of Italy, they were repulsed.

5. Tho' the Saracens put to death all heathen idolaters, they only exacted a tribute of Jews and christians, but by their contemptuous treatment of them, and their various

various oppressions, they made their lives sufficiently miserable. As the principal object of this representation is, no doubt, the manner in which the christian world was affected by the Saracens, the restriction of their power of *killing* may mean that they should not succeed so far as to destroy the Roman empire, and tho' they dismembered it, and got possession of several of its provinces, they never succeeded in their repeated attempts to take Constantinople, the seat of the empire.

As the natural locusts are abroad about five months of the hottest part of the year, so the mischief done by these metaphorical locusts is here confined to the same time. But if we reckon years for days, this period will be one hundred and fifty years ; and within that time the Saracens made all their conquests. For from A. D. 612, when Mahomet began to preach, to A. D. 762, when their empire had attained its greatest height, and the caliph Almanzor built Bagdat, and called it *the city of peace*, was exactly 150 years ; tho' I by no means think that when round numbers, as here, are made use of, any such exactness was intended.

7. It is thought that in the description of these locusts there is an allusion to the personal appearance of the Saracens. They are compared to horses prepared for battle, and the Arabs excel greatly in horsemanship, and their armies consist chiefly of cavalry. Their turbans are thought to resemble crowns, but so does every turban more or less.

8. The Arabs wear their hair long ; and the *iron teeth* of these locusts must denote their great power.

10. How these circumstances in the appearance of these locusts correspond with that of the Saracens I do not perceive. There is too much of imagination in the observations of many commentators on this subject.

11. This does not belong to natural locusts, but only to these metaphorical ones. They have no chief, or leader, like the bees; but the Saracens had. They were all subject to the order of one, called the *Caliph*, or *commander of the faithful*, during all the time in which they made their conquests. Afterwards several of the governors of distant provinces became independent, and they had wars with one another.

On the whole, there cannot well be any doubt but that the Saracens were intended by this representation, and considering the great mischief they did to the christian world, they were a sufficient cause of one of the three woes which the angel announced.

13. There is a wonderful variety in the scenery of these extraordinary visions, tho' they are all exceedingly solemn and striking. Here, instead of there being any thing *visible* in the first instance, as in all the preceding cases, the apostle *hears a voice*, and it is not said from whence it proceeds. It is only said to come from the four horns of the altar, that is, from the altar which had four horns. If, as is most probable, it was from the altar of incense, the voice came from near the throne.

15. By these *four angels* all commentators now suppose were meant the four sultanies, or kingdoms of Tartars, who came from the North-eastern parts of Asia,
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and at different times settled in Asia Minor, but all of them between A. D. 1034 and 1080. However, they made no great progress till they were joined by some Turks under Ortogrul, who was proclaimed sultan in A. D. 1295; and from this time they began to extend their conquests in a very extraordinary manner. Before this they were checked by the Greek emperor, and also by the Crusaders, who went from Europe to recover the holy land from the Mahometans.

Their *slaying the third part of men*, whereas the locusts in the preceding trumpet only *tormented* them, probably signifies their putting an end to the Roman empire in the East, an attempt in which the Saracens failed; and their being prepared *for a day, a month, and a year*, may either signify their being ready at any time to obey the orders of the Almighty, or that they should be so long in completing their conquests; and it is remarkable that from the time of their taking Katahi under Ortogrul in A. D. 1281, to their taking Kaminice in A. D. 1672, this number reduced to years (*viz.* three hundred and ninety one) exactly intervened. And from the last of these dates it is acknowledged that the Turkish power has been on the decline. Some time before this event, bishop Lloyd, from the consideration of this prophecy, said that that year would be the utmost period of their conquests. But his being right in this conjecture, does not prove that he was right in the interpretation of the prophecy.

16. The Turkish armies, like those of the Saracens, were originally chiefly cavalry, and uncommonly numerous. The *Timariots*, who held their land by military

litary service, are said to have been between seven and eight hundred thousand, some say a million; and besides these there are the *Spahi's* and other horsemen.]

18. The colour of their breast plates appears from this description to be *red, blue, and yellow*, and from the first the Othmans have been fond of these colours. These are the colours of their warlike dress. The colours of the *Spahi's* are red or yellow, or both. The *fire and smoke* issuing from their mouths is generally thought to denote the *fire arms* of which the *Turks* soon made great use, before they were made known to the Europeans. One piece of ordnance employed at the siege of Constantinople is said to have required seventy yoke of oxen and two thousand men to draw it, and one of them threw balls that weighed three hundred pounds. But perhaps all that was intended by this appearance of fire and smoke was something that was terrific in their conquests.

19. What is meant by their doing hurt with their *tails* I do not understand, any more than a similar account of the locusts in the preceding trumpet, which in this respect are compared to scorpions. That *false doctrine* was intended, as most expositors are of opinion, I cannot think at all probable, because all the calamities described in these visions are of a temporal nature. Perhaps, it means that the mischief they should occasion would not end with their conquests, but that other calamitous events would follow; and it is remarkable that all the countries subject to the *Turks* are greatly oppressed and depopulated by bad government. This was

was also in some measure the consequence of the conquests of the Saracens. Or this may allude to the Turkish horsemen being trained, as were the Persians, to shoot as they retreat ; or to their frequently having another mounted behind the horseman, who at a proper time alights and fights on foot. *De Loys Harmonie des propheties*, p. 259.

20. Notwithstanding the destruction of the Eastern empire, both the Greek and the Latin churches continued in the same corrupt and idolatrous state in which they had been for some time before. The church of Rome made the same pretensions to miracles and prodigies.

The calamities occasioned by the conquests of the Turks make the second of the three woes, and it was not less severe than the former.

Ch. X. In this place we have a remarkable interruption in the course of these visions. The scene is changed from heaven, to which the apostle had been taken up, to the earth, on which he is now represented as standing.

1. These circumstances, like those which attended the appearance of Jesus at the opening of the vision, seem to be designed to impress the mind of the apostle with awe and reverence, and therefore it is no consequence to attend to each of them in particular, as if they had an appropriate signification.

2. The first book of which we have an account was sealed with seven seals, but these had all been opened, and therefore this which is called a *little book* may be the remains of the former book, now open, and which
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the angel was permitted to explain more at large. The attitude of this angel is peculiarly striking, but whether any thing particular be meant by his having one foot on the earth, and the other on the sea, is not certain.

3. What it was that the angel cried, or proclaimed, is not said. As the seven thunders immediately follow, it might be only some words indicating their approach.

4. Notwithstanding the prohibition addressed to the apostle, there have not been wanting conjectures concerning the meaning of these *thunders*. The most ingenious, and probable, is that of Mr. Bicheno, who supposes that, since the place of these thunders is between the conclusion of the sixth trumpet and the commencement of the seventh, they must relate to the *wars* which intervened between them, or those that immediately followed the conquest of Kaminice, by which the Turkish empire was carried to its greatest extent, and those which preceded the French revolution, which he conceives to be the sounding of the seventh trumpet; and he finds exactly seven great European wars in that interval, viz. one that commenced in A. D. 1700 and ended in 1721, a second from 1733 to 1735, a third from 1737 to 1784, a fourth from 1755 to 1763, a fifth from 1768 to 1773, the sixth from 1775 to 1789, and the seventh from A. D. 1788 to 1791.

6. This has been variously interpreted. According to some, he swore that there should be no more *delay*; and what follows makes this probable, because it announces the speedy approach of the great events which

which were the principal objects of this series of visions.

7. As the event here referred to was the same that was announced by the former prophets, it must be what is called *the kingdom of heaven*, and of the Messiah, and the final happy state of the world as what would soon follow the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

10. *Eating the book*, no doubt, means reading it; and attending to its contents; and as the general and final object was great and glorious, it was at first very pleasing to the apostle, but when he considered more attentively the calamitous events which would precede the glorious ones, he was filled with the deepest concern.

11. Not that he was to be sent to any distant nation, but that his prophecies would relate to them.

Ch. XI. All the visions from this place to the account of the pouring out of the vials, seem to relate to the anti-christian corruptions of religion, and its restoration from them, without any respect to the sounding of the trumpets; being a more particular account of a series of important events. And the same events are indicated by different emblems, that by comparing them together their correspondence with them may be better understood.

1. This resembles that vision in Ezekiel, in which the temple and its courts were measured by an angel.

2. By the order not to measure the *outer court*, because it was given to the Gentiles to be trampled under foot forty two months, we are given to understand, that
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the church of Christ will be in a state of oppression for so many years as those months contain days, which is 1260, a number which we shall find in two other places of this book, as well as once in Daniel, denoting no doubt, the same period of time. In this place there is no intimation from what time these years are to be reckoned.

3. We have here another representation of the same thing. The *two witnesses* signify that there will always be a sufficient number, tho' not very many, to bear witness to the truth amidst all the corruptions of it, but that they will have many difficulties to struggle with for the space of 1260 years. These days being the same number with the *forty two months* mentioned just before, must denote the same period of time; but here also is no intimation from what term they are to be reckoned.

4. This is an allusion to one of the representations in the visions of Zechariah, in which Zerubbabel and Joshua were compared to the same emblems; by which was intimated that they would be supported by divine providence till they had finished the work for which they were appointed, which was the building of the temple. In like manner, these witnesses would not be left without support, notwithstanding all the power of their oppressors.

6. This language does not denote the proper power of the witnesses themselves, but the power of God, which would be exerted not only in protecting them, but also in finally punishing their enemies. What is done by God by their means, or on their account, is here,

Here, as is usual in the scriptures, said to be done by them. Thus God says to Jeremiah Ch. v, 14, *I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.* He also says to him Ch. i, 10, *See I have set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms to root out, and to pull down, &c. to build and to plant,* that is God would authorize him to announce such events.

7. It is not necessary to suppose that this killing of the witnesses will be deferred to some particular time, at the conclusion of their testimony, but that it will frequently happen, that particular witnesses will be put to death when they shall have given their testimony, in every part of this period of 1260 years. They are to be put to death by a power represented by a beast arising out of the abyss, or bottomless pit; but no such beast has been mentioned, but will be hereafter. All that has hitherto been said of this abyss, is that a great smoke or cloud, came out of it, at the sounding of the fifth trumpet.

8. We have here a plain intimation where the principal seat of this persecuting power is, viz. *Rome*, which, on account of its vices and idolatry is here called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, as it is elsewhere called *Babylon*. These witnesses will be put to death in all countries subject to this anti-christian power, the whole extent of it being called *a city*, and particular countries the *streets* of it. It was by persons acting on the same principles with those of this power, that Jesus himself, as well as these his witnesses, were put to death. It was also within

within the bounds of the same empire, viz. that of Rome.

9. Besides killing these witnesses, their persecutors would even deny them the common rites of burial, and insult them in every method in their power.

12. From this it may be inferred that these witnesses will not always continue in a state of oppression, but that, to the terror of their persecutors, they will even rise to great power. This space of *three days and an half* has been very variously interpreted. Some think it equivalent to *three years and an half*, and therefore expect that their exaltation will take place when the persecuting power will wholly cease. Others think that it implies a promise that the extreme violence of particular persecutions will seldom exceed that time. And it is remarkable, that this has been the case in many instances. The Hussites revived after a state of oppression of a few years; the Lutherans after the victory of Charles V. in A. D. 1548, which put them wholly in his power; the Vaudois more than once after the same space of time. The persecution of the Protestants in England by queen Mary lasted about as long, and so did the persecution of them on several occasions in France.

Lastly, Mr. Bicheno thinks, that as *days* may signify any *periods of time* in general, they may here denote *lunations* of thirty days each, so that three and an half will be one hundred and five; and these may be so many *years*; and exactly that space of time elapsed from the revocation of the edict of Nantes in A. D. 1685, to the commencement of the French revolution in

in A. D. 1790, when religious liberty was asserted and declared. That this is the termination of the sufferings of the witnesses is the more probable from what is mentioned in the next verse.

13. An earthquake naturally denotes a revolution, and a tenth part of the city one of the ten kingdoms subject to the papal power, and France is the chief of them, being that which gave the popes their temporal power.

Instead of *men* it should have been *names of men*, or perhaps *titles*. But tho' seven destructions of these titles are enumerated by the French themselves, without any view to this prophecy, I do not see how the *seven thousand* can be explained, except by allowing in a general way a thousand persons to each name or title.

That the other parts of this emblematical city, not immediately affected by this revolution, are affrighted at this great event is sufficiently apparent; and tho' they have not yet given glory to God, this will probably enough be the case when the whole series of events, of which this is only the beginning, shall be completed.

15. What is related in the last verses of this chapter evidently belongs to the account of the *sealed book*; for it has no particular reference to what immediately precedes or follows it. These verses, therefore, should seem to be better placed either at the end of the ninth, or the beginning of the fourteenth chapter, where they would not interrupt the account of this open book. The *second woe* is, no doubt occasioned by the events under the sixth trumpet. If, however, these verses be placed where they were intended (and there is no authority

for a contrary supposition) we have here a circumstance of particular importance, viz. that the sounding of the seventh trumpet will immediately follow the termination of the persecution of the witnesses, and the revolution which was coincident with that event; and if this be the late revolution in France, we may conclude that a series of events is already commenced which will not cease till the glorious times there expressed shall take place.

19. There is no apparent connection between the first part of this verse and the second, and therefore some suppose that the latter clause belongs to the next representation in the following chapter. But it may denote, in general terms, the circumstances of the great revolution, by which the above mentioned events were to be brought about.

In the second temple, which was built after the return from the Babylonish captivity, there was no *Ark*. That which had been made in the time of Moses had, no doubt, been destroyed, together with the temple of Solomon, by Nebuchadnezzar, and had not been replaced.

Ch. XII. In this vision we have another view of the persecution to which the true church of Christ will be exposed during the prevalence of anti-christian power.

1. I do not suppose that any thing was meant by these particular emblems besides exhibiting this woman, (which no doubt represents the true church of Christ) in the most dignified manner, and in this view nothing can be conceived to exceed it.

2. In this we have an emblem of a strong and numerous offspring, of many converts made to christianity.

3. This dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon its heads, must represent the Roman empire in general, from its commencement to its termination in ten kingdoms, in every part of which it would be a persecutor of the true church. The seven heads represent, as we shall see, both the seven hills, on which the city of Rome was built, in order to identify the place, and also its seven successive forms of government. The seven crowns may signify that in all these forms its power would be great and absolute:

4. As this beast is a dragon, one instrument of its power is in its tail, which a dragon or large serpent is supposed to move with great force; and stars represent civil powers, many of which were destroyed by the Romans; so that it is commonly said that their empire extended over a third part of the known world.

6. As the kingdoms of the world are destined for Christ and the Saints, to whom all power will be given, and it will be employed to crush all their adversaries, this must be the *man-child* of which the church is delivered; and its being taken up into heaven may signify the purpose of God to bring about this great event in its due time, till which they remain, as it were, with him, while the church, their mother, still remains in a state of persecution, which is to continue all the time of the prevalence of anti-christian power. By this it appears that we have another emblem of the same state

of things that was typified by leaving out the court of the temple to be trodden by the Gentiles.

11. In these verses we seem to have an account of a contest for civil power between the heathen and the christian emperors, in which the latter prevailed by the advancement of Constantine, and the defeat of his heathen competitors, with an intimation that a principal cause of the wonderful increase of christianity (which finally disposed the empire to become christian) was their constancy in bearing persecution.

14. Tho' the empire was now become nominally christian, yet we see its power still employed to persecute the true church of Christ. She was, however, preserved, tho' as in a wilderness, exposed to many hardships for the space of time above mentioned, viz *a time, times, and half a time*, a number first mentioned by Daniel, and evidently equivalent to the twelve hundred and sixty days, or years, in the preceding part of this vision.

There is some inconsistency in this representation; the dragon being thrown from his seat of power, and yet retaining so much of it as to persecute the church. But if the dragon represents the whole Roman government, as by its having seven heads and ten horns it must do, there could not have been any other power that could persecute in this period; and tho' powers nominally christian were in the government, it soon became an anti-christian, and persecuting power. In images so complex as these, we must not expect perfect consistency, and the meaning may be sufficiently obvious, notwithstanding. Interpreters appear to me
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to have been embarrassed and misled by endeavouring to make these emblems more perfect than the use of them required. To have been perfectly consistent, the power that persecuted should have continued to be heathen and not even nominally christian.

There is, however, a change in the signification of the *dragon*, sufficiently intimated by the writer in the ninth verse, where he says that he is called *the devil and Satan*; so that from being the Roman empire, it is now the *diabolical spirit*, by which it was actuated, or the *principle of evil in general*. Accordingly, we shall find that this dragon continues upon the stage till after the millenium, long after every trace of the Roman empire, heathen or christian, was gone.

17. As the woman is represented as concealed somewhere in the wilderness, the dragon, being on the earth, had no means of destroying her but by a flood, which might find her wherever she was. But this flood is represented as swallowed up by a chasm in the earth, the only natural way in which it could be made to disappear. This denotes that, tho' the church should continue in a state of persecution, means would be found in the course of divine providence to preserve it from destruction. The utmost rage of its enemies would never be able to effect this.

Ch XIII. The power which was to persecute the christian church is an object of such importance to all christians, that several figurative representations are given of it in this book. We are now to consider another of them.

1. Daniel saw all his four beasts rise out of the sea, tho' their real origins were different from one another. Dan. vii. 3. and yet as in the interpretation they are all said v. 17. to *rise out of the earth*, I do not think that much stress can be laid on this circumstance. If however, there be any distinction to be made between the origin of this beast, which is said to rise out of the sea, and that of the next, which rises out of the earth, I think the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton, on the whole, the most probable. The Jews called all those countries to which they had no access except by sea *islands of the sea*, and this comprized all Europe; whereas Asia, to all the parts of which they had access without shipping, was their *land, or continent*. This beast, then, rising out of the sea, must have its origin in Europe, and therefore is naturally interpreted of the *Roman empire*, in some state or other; and the seven heads and ten horns indicate the same thing. Moreover, as the crowns are now on the *horns*, and not on the heads, it shews that this empire was in its last state, when divided into ten kingdoms. But all the heads had on them the name of *blasphemy*. It is power opposed to that of God, usurping his authority, and persecuting his servants.

2. Of Daniel's four beasts, which represented the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman empires, the first resembled a lion, the second a bear, and the third a leopard. The fourth had no particular name, but is only described as *dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong*. This beast, therefore, resembling all the former three, may be the fourth of
Daniel

Daniel, or the Roman empire ; and as it succeeded the dragon, which represented Rome heathen, it must be Rome christian, or in its last state.

8. The heads of this beast represent the different forms of its government, the sixth of which, as we are afterwards informed, Ch. xvii. 10. existed at the time that this book was written. It was, therefore, the *imperial* power that received this wound ; and this it did when Rome was no longer the seat of government, which was the case while it was under the dominion of the Heruli, the Goths, and under the dominion of the Exarch of Ravenna. But when it became once more the seat of government, as it did when the popes became temporal princes, its wound might be said to be healed ; and the world must have been astonished to see a power, different indeed in its kind, but equal in authority, rising in the same place, orders of government issuing, as formerly, from Rome.

4 By *worshipping the dragon* must be meant the respect that was paid, not indeed to heathenism, which was now no more, but to something of the same nature, equally polytheistical and idolatrous, which was the case with Rome christian, or rather anti-christian. It is no wonder that it was so much respected and dreaded, when, to appearance, it was omnipotent, the greatest princes being often obliged to submit to it.

5. Many copies read, *has power to make war*. What is here said of this beast is said of the little horn in Dan. vii. 8. which had *eyes like a man, and a mouth speaking great things*. This horn also *made war with the saints and prevailed against them*, and his power

was to continue *a time, times, and half a time*, which coincides with the *forty two months* of this beast.

There has been much difficulty in ascertaining the time from which this number of years is to be reckoned. If we be guided by this account, it is the duration of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, or the Roman empire after its division into ten kingdoms; and there is nothing to contradict this in any other of the three places in which this number occurs. The outer court of the temple is to be trodden under foot forty and two months, Ch. xi, 2. the witnesses prophecy in sackcloth twelve hundred and sixty days, v. 3. and the woman, which represents the church, was in the wilderness twelve hundred and sixty days, Ch. xii, 6. All these are perfectly consistent with this account; and according to it we may expect the fall of this power in twelve hundred and sixty years after the fall of the Western empire, or from a period not long after it, when the ten kingdoms were formed, and if so, this great event may be expected about the present time.

But according to Daniel vii, 25. a power to persecute the saints, and to change times and laws, is given to the little horn (which represents the papal power) *a time, times, and the dividing of time*; and this power rose after the rest, and was to subdue three of them.

If we take this date from the time of this subduing the three kings or kingdoms, it must at least be from the year 756, when the popes got possession of the exarchate; but it existed before it subdued the three kings, and the popes had great power, tho' not sovereign power, and made a very bad use of it, before this time. It

was in A. D. 607, that pope Boniface received from the emperor Phocas the title of *universal bishop*. It is therefore possible that this account may not be inconsistent with the others; and indeed it is but reasonable to interpret one prophecy by another, and especially one that is older and more obscure, by one that is later, and more intelligible.

6. The blasphemy of the beast, of which the papal power was a part, consists in the popes usurping the authority of God, setting up other objects of worship besides him, and persecuting his true worshippers, and in this all the kingdoms represented by the ten horns concurred.

7. The number of christians who suffered death for not acknowledging the supremacy of the pope, and subscribing to the doctrines of the catholic church, amounted in all to several millions.

8. The far greater part of the nominally christian world professed the catholic religion. This should have been rendered *whose names were not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the lamb that was slain*.

9. This was an expression used by our Saviour after delivering something of peculiar importance. Such, therefore, we may conclude the account of this blasphemous persecuting power to be, and consequently the solemn warning to the christian church to be on their guard against it.

10. Here the faithful disciples of Christ, who have the virtue not to conform to the iniquitous decrees of this anti-christian power, are encouraged to expect, that
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in due time, God will avenge their cause upon it ; and that the measure she has dealt to others will be dealt to herself ; but in the mean time her tyranny will be an exercise of their faith and patience.

In the remaining part of this chapter we have an account of another antichristian power, but in connection with, and subordinate to, the former.

11. As the former beast rose out of the *sea*, or had an European origin, this arose out of the *earth*, or the continent, that is, according to Sir Isaac Newton, it had an Asiatic origin. It had two horns like a lamb, and is therefore an ecclesiastical power, but spake like a dragon, and therefore was as tyrannical and mischievous as any civil power, even that of the heathen emperors. It is probable, therefore, that this second beast represents the ecclesiastical power as exercised by the popes. And tho' I do not think that an attention to the different origins of those beasts is of much consequence, it is remarkable that all the radical corruptions of the church of Rome had their rise in Asia, especially in the decrees of the general councils, all of which were held there, and more particularly the second of Nice, in which the worship of images was established. Even that supremacy over other churches, which is the great characteristic of the popes, was first claimed by the bishops of Constantinople.

12. As the papal power is supported by the temporal powers, represented by the ten horns of the former beast, so in return it supports their authority. It was the prospect of this that induced Pepin and Charlemagne

magne to give them temporalities, and this has been the reason why all other christian princes in Europe have supported their authority.

13. That is, he pretends to the power of working miracles ; and the church of Rome abounds with such pretences. One circumstance necessary to the canonization of any of their saints is the miracles wrought by them, both before, and after, their death. This descent of fire from heaven in the sight of men probably refers to the dreadful excommunications of the church of Rome, in pronouncing which a priest in an elevated situation throws down a lighted torch, to denote that the person excommunicated would fall, and be extinguished like that torch.

16. There is much difficulty in distinguishing this image of the beast from the beast himself, because the same power is ascribed to them both. It probably refers to the *ecclesiastical courts*, which were formed after the pattern of the civil courts, in all christian countries, and to which all persons were obliged to submit, tho' it formed an *imperium in imperio*, a jurisdiction intirely distinct from that of the prince in whose states it was erected. This was more especially the case with the inquisition as far as its power extended ; but it applies to the ecclesiastical courts in general.

17. In antient times slaves often bore the marks of their masters, and the devotees of particular deities bore some characteristic mark of the object of their devotion. In like manner the Roman Catholics were obliged to make an open profession of their attachment to the papal see, on pain of being cut off from all the natural

natural and civil rights of men. An excommunicated person, could have no intercourse whatever with catholic christians, so that when the sentence was literally executed, they must necessarily perish. This was actually the case of some Lollards in England, and many others.

18. I am not satisfied with any interpretation that I have yet met with of the *number of the name of the beast*. The most antient, and that which is generally thought to be the most probable, was suggested by Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of John himself, tho' it is not pretended that it came from him viz. that it is $\lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$; since the numeral letters in this word amount to six hundred and sixty six. The same number is also found in the Hebrew word למנוח , which has the same signification. But see no reason why both these words should be *adjectives*, and still less why one of them should be of the masculine, and the other of the feminine gender, for if this circumstance be changed, the proper number is no longer to be found in them.

Besides, these words are rather the *name of the beast*, than the *number of his name*, which is different from it. It was also something that every person was required to have if he had not the mark of the beast, or its name, or he would not be permitted to buy or sell. This circumstance excludes the interpretations of Grotius, Lowman, and others, which is that it denotes the *number of years* that elapsed between the time of the apostle and the appearance of this beast, tho' this number of years did intervene between the year 54, and 756, when

when the popes acquired their temporal power by the gift of the exarchate. It also excludes the title of *Ludovicus*, for which Mr. Bicheno contends. It must be something common to all the members of the catholic church.

By the *number of a man*, Le Clerc supposes to be meant a small number, such as a man may easily count.

Ch. XIV. We have now some account of the state of the true church, in the midst of the corruptions that have been described, the piety of its members, their patience, and their reward, with the destruction that awaits their enemies.

1. The visions which interrupt the account of what is represented as passing *in heaven*, seem now to be closed, tho' without any notice of it. For now we find the views of the apostle directed to the heavenly Jerusalem, and the temple of God that was there. The number one hundred and forty four thousand, is the same with that of those who were said to be sealed in the preceding part of the prophecy, as having kept themselves from the idolatrous corruptions of the times in which they lived. They have the name of God, on their foreheads, to signify their being devoted to his sole worship, in opposition to that of saints and angels. Some copies have *his name and his Father's name*.

3. The scene is now evidently in the heavenly regions, and near the throne, where the four living creatures, and the twenty four elders were. What this song was we have no intimation given us; but it was something in which only themselves could join; not perhaps

perhaps on account of any peculiar difficulty in understanding it, but as not suiting the condition or sentiments of other persons.

4. That is, they were not guilty of *spiritual adultery*, as idolatry is frequently called in the antient prophets, but adhered to the principles of genuine christianity. By *first fruits* in this place, we cannot understand the first converts to christianity; for this vision probably refers to the time of anti-christian idolatry and persecution; but, like the first fruits under the law, they were peculiarly devoted to God, and excellent in their kind, tho' few in comparison of the harvest that was to follow them.

5. This cannot mean christian perfection; for to that, no person ever attained, but a perfect freedom from the corruptions of the times in which they lived.

6. As the scene of this vision immediately precedes the destruction of anti-christ, we seem authorised to infer from it, that before that time there will be a more general diffusion of christian knowledge in the world; and this may be occasioned, as Dr. Hartley conjectures, by the dispersion of zealous and intelligent christians to various parts of it, whither they would not have gone in more peaceable times. They are exhorted to flee out of mystical Babylon, and wherever they went they should carry their knowledge and their zeal with them.

7. These new preachers will probably be unitarians, confining their worship to the one God, the maker of all things, and warning all people to keep themselves clear

clear of every thing tending to idolatry, or any other worship than that of the God and the Father of Jesus Christ.

8. Here we have an account of the fall of this mystical Babylon, which shews that this was the time of the seventh trumpet ; and the principal cause of her punishment is distinctly mentioned. It was an idolatrous church, and drew all nations into that crime.

11. Here, in figurative language, the judgments of God are denounced against the anti-christian power, and all who submitted to it. To *drink of a cup* is a frequent emblem of receiving punishment ; alluding perhaps to the method of putting criminals to death by poison, tho' we do not find that this was the custom of the Jews.

13. After the account of the fall of this anti-christian power, we have here a commendation of the virtue and patience of those who, at the risk of their lives, opposed its usurpations. Tho' they would die in the glorious struggle, *they* would not fail to receive their reward. By the term *henceforth* may be intimated, that they would *soon* obtain a happy resurrection ; the final destruction of anti-christ being coincident with the second coming of Christ to raise the dead and judge the world. Then may be expected at least what is called *the first resurrection*, viz. that of the martyrs, and other distinguished adherents of the pure gospel of Christ.

14. In confirmation of this we have now a representation of the coming of Christ in the clouds, with emblems

blems of royalty on his head, and an instrument of punishment in his hand.

16. By the *harvest* we are undoubtedly in this place to understand the ripeness of the anti-christian world for punishment, its iniquity being full. In this sense the prophet Joel uses the same metaphor Ch. iii, 13. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come get ye down for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.* To this passage there seems to be an allusion here.

20. This is another emblem of punishment, perhaps one subsequent to the former, as the vintage is to the harvest; or it may be only a different emblem of the same thing. But whenever these judgments take place, it will probably be in a series of some continuance, so that the former part may be called the harvest, and the latter part the vintage. That it is an intimation of calamity by war is most naturally inferred from the mention of the great quantity of blood that will be shed on the occasion, which is hyperbolically expressed by saying it will be to *the horses bridles*.

It has been observed that the space of *sixteen hundred furlongs* is the extent of the pope's dominions, from the Tyber to the Po; as if this country in particular was to be the seat of this calamity. But we must proceed with great caution in the interpretation of prophecies not yet fulfilled, tho' it is probable that the accomplishment of this is not very distant.

Ch. XV. Hitherto we have had only a general account of the fall of the anti-christian power, tho' with sufficient intimations that it would not be without blood,

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or war ; but this being a most interesting object in the divine dispensations, we have now an emblematical view of the particulars of its fall, in the appointment of seven angels to pour out seven vials, each indicating some part of the judgment inflicted upon it.

2. As the fate of this anti-christian power, by which the true church had suffered so much, has been sufficiently indicated; the members of the true church of Christ who had withstood all its attempts to ensnare them, are here represented as rejoicing in their safety.

3. Some MSS. have *king of nations*. W.

As there is some analogy between the situations of those who escaped from this anti-christian tyranny, and the Israelites who had escaped from Egyptian bondage, the former are represented as in a similar situation, in or seemingly, according to their position with respect to the apostle, who was looking towards them, upon a sea of glass ; but said to be *mingled with fire*, perhaps from the appearance of flashes of lightning ; singing such an hymn of praise as the Israelites sung on their deliverance.

4. The sentiments of this truly sublime hymn are similar to those contained in the song of Moses after they had passed through the Red sea. It is, therefore, called *the song of Moses*, and also *of the lamb*, because it is adapted to the situation of the christian church.

8. This preparation for the pouring out of the vials is equal in solemnity to any thing in this book, which exhibits more striking images than any that are to be found elsewhere ; but why each particular in the ceremonial should be adjusted exactly as is here represented,

ed, and what was meant by each of the particulars, as the drefs of the angels, their girdles, one of the four living creatures delivering the vials, and why the temple from which they iffue fhould on this occafion be filled with fmoke, or a cloud, it is in vain for us to form any conjecture, tho' there was, no doubt, fome reafon for each of them. This fmoke, however, or cloud, was the token of the divine prefence in the paffage of the Ifraelites through the wildernefs, and on other occafions, and was more particularly conspicuous on extraordinary occafions, either of divine favour, or divine vengeance. This was the cafe immediately before the punifhment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, for rebelling againft Moles and Aaron, Num. xvi, 19. There, as we read, *the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation*. Prefently after this, Korah and his company were fwallowed up by the earth opening under them. And the next day, when all the people murmured at this, we read v. 42, that *the cloud covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord appeared*. After this the divine intention being declared, Moles directed Aaron to burn incenfe, and make an atonement, for, faid he, *there is wrath gone out from the Lord, and the plague is began*. This appearance of the divine glory was of a fimilar kind, and introduced for a fimilar purpofe.

The Englifh word *vials*, may miflead the reader. They were fuch *cups* as were ufed in the temple for the purpofe of libations, wider at the top than at the bottom.

Ch.

Ch. XVI. The pouring out of the vials, which terminated in the destruction of the ten horned beast, no doubt constitutes the third of the three woes, the first of which followed the sounding of the fifth trumpet, and the second that of the sixth; the former announcing the calamities occasioned by the invasions of the Saracens, and the latter by those of the Turks. The whole of this third woe, and consequently all of the vials must, in order to preserve the uniformity of these visions, be contained in the seventh trumpet; for on the mention of its sounding (Ch. xi. 15) there was no account of any thing more than the general object of it, the destruction of the anti-christian power, issuing in the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdom of Christ. But as this kingdom could not be established till the pouring out of these vials, which had no other object than the destruction of the same anti-christian power, they must all be referred to the seventh trumpet. And as the seventh trumpet did not sound till after the resurrection of the witnesses, and the great earthquake, in which a tenth part of the city fell, and this was probably fulfilled in the French revolution, these vials must take their dates in events subsequent to it. If this supposition be right, this revolution was merely the earthquake, a change in the seat of power, without any other calamity than the destruction of *the names of men*, or hereditary titles, tho' a great alarm was excited by it. We are, therefore, to look for the effect of the vials in the calamitous events which have followed this revolution; and they have indeed, been such as in a general way, sufficiently correspond to the

emblematical description now before us. For they evidently announce great calamity by war, and much bloodshed. Being now, however, in the midst of the events, it may be impossible for us to distinguish what particular events correspond to each vial.

7. Since the first vial is poured on the earth, Mr. Bicheno interprets it literally, of *wars by land*, and since the second is poured into the *sea*, he thinks it announces calamities occasioned by naval operations, or in places contiguous to the sea; and since the third is poured upon the rivers and fountains of water, it will fall on those cities which are built upon great rivers. It is certain that the calamity occasioned by this war has hitherto been chiefly on the land, tho' the sea has not been without its share; and according to present appearances, more will be done on this element than has yet taken place. But I see no occasion for this distinction in the interpretation of these vials, any more than in that of the trumpets, to which they correspond. Besides, it is very possible, as many commentators have observed, that the pouring out of these vials, tho' mentioned as in succession, may be in some measure contemporaneous, so that part, at least, of all the calamities here announced will be inflicted at the same time, in different parts of the empire of the beast.

All these three first vials evidently announce calamity by means of *war*, whatever be the particular theatre of them; and therefore we may perhaps consider them as in a great measure poured out already.

11. As the *sun* is the most distinguished body in the system of nature, it probably signifies *monarchical power*

power, and that of all the horns of the mystical beast. I therefore think, with Mr. Towers, that these two vials announce a great diminution of their authority. The first of them, however may signify excessive abuse of that power, to the great distress of the subjects ; owing perhaps to an apprehension of its being in danger ; and the second, which falls upon the seat, or throne, of the beast, may announce the very thing which they dreaded, the real diminution or loss of their power, by the prevalence of democratical principles, and the claims of the people to the benefit of equal representative governments, which are now very general, and almost universal, in Europe ; and yet we see no disposition to relax any of the pretensions to authority that has hitherto been exercised, tho' their kingdom is full of darkness, and they are to the last degree distressed by the prospect before them. They *gnaw their tongues for pain*, but without repenting of their deeds.

12. As the mention of the river Euphrates in the account of the trumpets, announced the rise of the Turkish empire in its neighbourhood, this drying up of the same river is generally thought to signify the destruction of the Turkish empire, to make way for the restoration of the Jews here called *the kings of the East*. But as there is no apparent propriety in giving that title to the Jews, all that was intended in the prophecy may be an allusion to the circumstances which prepared the way for the fall of the antient Babylon, previous to the destruction of this mystical Babylon, which is the real object of the prophecy. Antient Babylon could not be taken till the river which flowed through it was diverted

ed from its usual course, and then the kings of the Medes and Persians who were from the East, were able to take it. In like manner, whatever be the obstacle that prevents the destruction of this mystical Babylon may be called the *river Euphrates*, and the drying of it up may be its removal. What this obstacle is, I do not pretend to determine. It may be the power of the temporal princes, which support the papal power, and ecclesiastical establishments in general.

16. These *kings of the earth*, are no doubt those that are represented by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the ten horns of the beast; and the unclean spirits resembling frogs, Mr. Danbery says, signify impostors and flatterers, and such are never wanting to instigate sovereign princes to projects that end in their destruction. Being compared to *spirit*, or *breath*, which is used in persuasion, they are, agreeable to analogy, represented as coming out of the *mouth*, and they are called the *spirits of Demons* for their wickedness. Their working miracles can only mean their pretensions to that power, on the promise of extraordinary events with which they flatter these kings.

As these kings are, in fact, themselves the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, it may signify their deceiving themselves, by presuming on their power to perform some thing extraordinary, by the wars in which they will engage. As they oppose the designs of God, they are said to be gathered to the battle, or as it should have been rendered, to *the war of the great day of God Almighty*; a war by which, whatever they may intend, he will accomplish the greatest events; and that it will
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be a war attended with much slaughter, is intimated by the place, in which their forces met, viz. *Armageddon*, or *Megiddo*, a place, as Mr. Lowman says, that had become proverbial for destruction and mourning as in Zech. xii, 11. 12. The same place is in Joel called the *valley of Jehosaphat*, the meaning of which word is *the judgment of God*. As this is called *the war of the great day of God Almighty*, there is no doubt but that this war of Armageddon, and the slaughter that will be occasioned by it, is the same that is represented by the *harvest* and the *vintage* in the preceding vision; and also in the prophecy of Joel, and therefore that the loss of lives will be beyond all example in history.

This account also much resembles what we have lately seen in the combination of the kings of Europe against the French republic; and the issue of this confederacy has hitherto been so much the same with the events here announced, that it is hardly possible to recite the prophecy but in such language as describes the events. The total defeat of this great confederacy was far from being expected at the commencement of the contest; so that nothing has more the appearance of a secret direction of divine providence; man intending one thing and God another.

There is a difficulty attending the circumstance of some of these spirits going out of the mouth of *the dragon*, as well as out of the mouth of the beast, and that of the false prophet; the dragon having represented the Roman empire in its heathen state, which in this stage of the prophecy no longer exists; he having given his seat and power to the beast, who therefore occupies
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his place: But notwithstanding this, he is not said to be *dead*, and the same spirit which actuated the heathen emperors, appears sufficiently in the christian kings. Both were equally persecutors of the true church; and therefore tho' he was not at this time *reigning*, it is consistent with the scenery of the vision, that he should take a part in the concerns of his successors. Besides, as I have observed, this dragon, which at first, was an emblem of the *heathen empire*, was changed into the *devil, or satan*, that is, the principle, or cause, of evil in general, and not merely of this evil in particular; and therefore it is represented as outliving both the beast and the false prophet, and all the remains of the Roman empire.

Some think that by the dragon is meant other sovereign princes, not represented by the ten horns of the beast, as the emperor of Russia, the kings of Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark; and therefore that this war is to terminate in the abolition of all kingly power. But this appears to me to be more than the prophecy announces. The clear object of scripture prophecy is the destruction of those monarchies which are represented by the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image in Daniel, and the ten horns of the beast in this book of Revelation, or the christian princes that are within the bounds of the antient Roman empire. That any thing farther is intended, should not be concluded without direct evidence.

Beza, with great diffidence, but with much probability, supposes that the 15th verse has by some accident been transferred into this place from some other,
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and he conjectures that its proper place is after the third verse in the third chapter, where it would make part of the message to the church of Sardis. It would certainly suit that place much better than this, where it has no connection with what goes before, or what follows it; and also supposes Christ to be the speaker, tho' this is the only passage that intimates any such thing; the speakers through all the rest of the vision being either angels, or some of the four living creatures that were about the throne.

21. This vial completes the destruction of the whole of the anti-christian power, temporal and spiritual, but in what manner it will be accomplished we must be content to learn from the event. This earthquake, or great convulsion, or revolution, is the same with that which is mentioned as following the blowing of the seventh trumpet, as is evident from the terms in which they are expressed being the very same. In Ch. xi, 19, we read, *And there were lightnings, and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

Not only will this be the fall of Babylon, or Rome, but also that of all the kingdoms that have supported its power. What is meant by the *great city being divided into three parts*, or the effects of this division, it is impossible for us to know; but certainly it is not to be understood of the undivided city of Rome, but the whole of her jurisdiction, all the countries that had acknowledged her supremacy, or the ten kingdoms represented by the horns of the beast. As Satan is called *the prince of the power of the air* (Eph. ii. 2) the pouring out of this vial into the air may indicate, as Bishop Newton observes

observes, that his whole kingdom, or power, will be shaken ; and as Satan is no other than the principle or cause of evil in general, natural and moral, it may announce the near approach of those happy times in which it is prophesied, that *the knowledge of the Lord will cover the whole earth*, and the formation of those *new heavens and new earth*, in which will dwell righteousness, and into which *nothing that defileth will be permitted to enter*.

Ch. XVII. The fall of mystical Babylon is so great an object of this prophecy, in consequence of its being so in the plan of the divine dispensations, that, as I have observed, there are a variety of views given of it. Thus after the preceding account of the order and progress of these judgments by which its destruction is to be effected, we have here a summary history of it, from its commencement to its termination, and such as makes it still more evident what power it represents.

2. Idolatry is frequently considered in the light of *adultery*, the deity worshipped being, as it were, the husband, and the worshippers the wife, who ought to be attached to him. The harlot is here represented as enticing her lovers with wine, which she presents to them.

3. This woman, no doubt, represents mystical Babylon, or a corrupt church, and the beast which she guides, by sitting on him, and which at the same time supports her, is no other than the same beast that rose out of the sea, or the Roman empire in its last state of division into ten kingdoms.

4. Both the colour of the beast, and the attire of the woman, is *scarlet*; and this, or purple, was the ancient dress of emperors and sovereigns, being exceedingly costly, and it is particularly affected by the popes and the cardinals. When they go abroad, their very mules have red housings.

5. It is said that the prostitutes of antiquity had their names not only on their doors, but sometimes on their foreheads. This representation, however, denotes an open and avowed prostitution; and the church of Rome has been far from concealing those departures from the simple truth of the gospel with which she is charged. On the contrary, she has always endeavoured to compel others to follow her example. There may also be an allusion to golden plates on the forehead of the highpriest, on which was engraved *holiness to the Lord*, this being the reverse of it.

6. The sight of a nominally christian church persecuting christians might well fill the apostle with astonishment, and for one christian put to death by heathen powers, ten at least have been put to death, and often with the most cruel tortures, by orders from the court of Rome. Nor has this been the only persecuting church. That of England has too closely followed her example.

7. The beast described before rose out of the sea, and this out of the abyss, or bottomless pit; but tho' these emblems may not be the same, it is evidently the same beast, at first an idolatrous and persecuting power in its heathen state, then ceasing to be so for a time, but assuming the same character afterwards, in a christian form

form, to the great admiration and pleasure of its partisans, who derived much emolument from its maxims and practices.

9. Here the seat of this anti-christian power is plainly described to be Rome, usually called the *city on seven hills*.

11. The term *kings* does not signify particular persons, but forms government, of which at the time of writing this book, there had been several in Rome, viz. by *kings, consuls, decemvirs, military tribunes, and dictators*. The sixth form, or that by *emperors* then existed. The state of Rome that succeeded the dissolution of the empire by Odoacer, and his successors the Goths, and which preceded the sovereignty of the popes, being different from any of the former, may be called a *seventh*; and the same empire under ten heads, one of which was at Rome, may be considered as the *eighth*. Or if the preceding intermediate state, as it did not possess sovereign authority, be not considered as one, the last will be the seventh. This was devoted to destruction, like the preceding.

But after the extinction of the exarchate which was the government of the Eastern emperors, the sovereign power in the city of Rome was in the *Senate and people*; so that this may perhaps be called the *seventh king*; or kingdom; which preceded the prophecy, or the sovereign power of the popes which was the eighth.

13. The ten kingdoms did not exist in the time of the apostle, but would do so at the time that this power would assume the character of this *emblematical beast*. In fact it constituted the beast, unless by the beast here

here mentioned be meant that with *two horns*, which represented the pope, as an ecclesiastical power. This seems to be the idea that is here taken up; for they are the ten horns, or the ten kingdoms, that gave this power and strength to this beast. The beast, therefore, is not one of them. But all the power that the popes acquired was given them by the ten kings. Their power was not derived from conquest, or inheritance, but was a gift, or voluntary acquiescence in their claims, and an active support of them.

If instead of *the beast* in these two verses, it had been the *woman that rode upon it*, of whom this was said, the emblem would have been more consistent, for it was *her* that the beast with ten horns supported.

14. All these ten kingdoms professing the Roman Catholic religion, have cruelly persecuted those who dissented from it, the faithful members of the true church of Christ; and they were permitted to prevail for an appointed time, but they are here represented as overcome by Christ, whose members they persecuted.

The victory over this idolatrous persecuting power is here ascribed to Christ himself, as if the instruments by which it was effected had been employed by him, and he had directed the whole proceeding. This makes it more probable that, in the prophecy of Daniel, commonly called that of the *seventy weeks*, the Messiah is said, as Mr. Blaney supposes, to have cut off the Jewish nation, and not that he was cut off by them, as it is commonly rendered. Also, according to a parable of our Saviour, he is represented as going to receive a kingdom

dom, and at his return he takes vengeance on his adversaries.

17. From this it is probable that by *the beast* in the twelfth and thirteenth verses is really meant *the woman who rides upon it*; for it is *her* that in due time they would hate, and strip of what they had given her. This part of the prophecy has already received a remarkable accomplishment. Several of the Catholic princes have resumed their grants to the see of Rome. A great part of Germany and Switzerland, and all England, long ago withdrew from her obedience. Several Catholic princes have seized on the revenues of the monasteries in their dominions. Spain and Portugal, the most devoted to the popes, have greatly abridged, and almost annihilated, the power of the inquisition, and led the way to the expulsion of the Jesuits, who had been the most zealous supporters of the papal power. And France, whose princes invested the popes with their temporalities, has now entirely thrown off their yoke, and may perhaps be the means of stripping them of the very provinces which they originally gave them.

18. This puts it beyond all doubt that the seat of this anti-christian power is no other than the city of Rome.

Ch XVIII. We have seen the rise, the progress, and the fall of mystical Babylon, or the anti-christian power, which represents that of the popes, and of the ten European kingdoms that supported them. Here we have an account of the rejoicing of true christians on the occasion; and it is so analogous to the rejoicing on the fall

fall of antient Babylon, and especially that of Tyre, in Ezekiel, that it seems to be a designed imitation of it, tho' not copied from it.

1. A circumstance peculiar to this angel who comes to announce the fall of Babylon, is the great splendour with which he is surrounded, so that the earth was enlightened with his glory. Tho' I do not lay much stress on what may be called the machinery of these visions, as an angel appearing in this or that form, or in this or that place, &c. yet it is not improbable that this very singular circumstance might be intended to signify the great increase of knowledge of all kinds, and especially of religious knowledge, before this great event, and as one natural means of accomplishing it.

Daniel speaking of these times, says, Ch. xii. 4, *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*; and certainly all the knowledge acquired by man till the last two hundred years, bears but a small proportion to the accession that has been made to it since that time, and especially within the memory of persons now living. This has been a great means of exposing errors and abuses in religion. The light that has been thrown upon history, civil and ecclesiastical, has been the means of discovering the usurpations of the church of Rome; and by shewing the natural causes of the introduction and of the progress of particular opinions and practices, has enabled us to distinguish the true from the false, what was taught by Christ and the apostles, and what has been the wood and straw that have been built on their foundation. This gradual progress of knowledge, tho' it gave no alarm at first, has proved

proved fatal to all tyranny, civil as well as ecclesiastical. The spirit of enquiry having extended itself to the subject of *government*, and the nature and formation of societies, the natural rights of men, the proper uses of governments, and the true foundation of power of all kinds, have been better understood. And with the knowledge of their *rights*, men have acquired the spirit to assert them when they are violated. The great object of the prophecies of Daniel, more especially was to predict the fall of all the absolute monarchies represented first by the parts of the great image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and then by the four beasts in his own vision, and the substituting of something of a very different kind, infinitely more favourable to virtue and happiness, in their place. The final breaking of this image is not like the silver succeeding the gold, or the brass the silver, &c. but the total destruction of the image itself.

Till of late years there prevailed an idea of some person having a *natural right to govern*, similar to a right to an estate, that is transmitted by inheritance, will, or gift; and on that foundation have all the European monarchies, represented by the beast with ten horns, been built. But now a principle of an opposite kind, utterly subversive of it, viz. that of governments being only an instrument to promote the welfare of the people, that of the mode of it being their own choice, and that of magistrates being their servants, appointed and displaced at their pleasure, is almost universally established. This must prove fatal to all hereditary power, and as subversive of it in all parts of the world, as it has been

been in France. And to this happy catastrophe the shocking abuses of all hereditary monarchies have greatly contributed; it being visible in the whole of their history, that the interest of the governors has been different from that of the governed, and that the latter has never been consulted any farther than it was thought to be subservient to the former. It is now evident that almost all the wars that have desolated the world have arisen from the ambition of princes to enlarge their dominions, that they have terminated in the oppression and impoverishment of the people, and that in consequence of them, the weight of debt and taxes has become so great in most of them, as to be no longer supportable. This was the more immediate cause of the revolution in France, and must operate in a similar manner in other countries. As hereditary princes have been those who have *destroyed the earth*, Ch. xi. 18, they are themselves devoted to destruction.

2. This is copied from the account of the fall of antient Babylon, to which papal Rome is compared. Of Babylon Isaiah says, Ch. xiii. 19, *Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and Satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces*. Being deserted by men, it would be considered as a place haunted by evil spirits, and dangerous to go into.

3. It is evident that the kings of Europe, tho' they have been in some measure enslaved by the papal hierarchy, have derived great advantages from it; having

often availed themselves of the papal grants to extort money from their subjects. And Rome, by being the centre of European politics, and in a manner the metropolis of Europe, has been much resorted to by ambassadors, and persons of rank. It has, of course, been the centre of much commerce, by which many persons have been enriched, by dealing in temporal commodities as well as spiritual ones. But in this description there is, no doubt, an allusion to Tyre, the most commercial city in the ancient world, implying that whatever may have been the sources of wealth to the inhabitants of Rome, they will fail, as did those of Tyre.

4. This must be antecedent, at least, to the complete fall of the *papal hierarchy*, and contains a most solemn warning to all the *christian world* to keep clear of the abuses with which that hierarchy was chargeable. It resembles the admonition of our Saviour, to fly out of Jerusalem, when the destruction of that city was approaching.

6. This seems to be an allusion to one of the laws of Moses, which required in some cases of theft the offender should restore the double of what he had stolen. This hierarchy having plundered the world, and lived by that plunder, must be treated as a thief and a robber.

8. At one time nothing seemed more firmly established than the power of the popes. It was superior to any thing on earth, and was to appearance better founded; and the arrogance of the popes was great in proportion.

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We are not to conclude from the language of this prediction, tho' many have done so, that the city of Rome will be burned or destroyed by an earthquake, attended with an eruption of fire. The expression is figurative, and may denote nothing more than the loss of its power, and the destruction of its present form of government.

10. From this we may infer that the fall of the papal power, or at least of a great part of it, will precede the fall of the European monarchies, represented by the ten horns of the beast. There is at this time a wonderful appearance of the completion of this prophecy. The kings of Europe see the approaching ruin of the papacy, and they lament it, but they *stand afar off*, unable to afford it any support.

From this place the lamentation over Rome proceeds as if it was a commercial city, resembling ancient Tyre; and according to the letter of the prophecy, it suits the type rather than the thing typified: for Rome is not a commercial city to the extent that is here intimated. But if by *Rome* be understood not merely the city so called, as all the countries that have been in her communion, the description may be sufficiently exact. The hierarchy of England so much resembles that of Rome, both in retaining many of its corruptions in doctrine and discipline, and having also persecuted those who dissented from her, that it may be considered as justly exposed to a similar judgement. The public reformation in England was very partial, the king succeeding to the power of the pope, as *supreme head of the church*, and therefore as opposed to the

the prerogative of Christ. And if the commerce of England be destroyed, this lamentation will be literally applicable to it. Holland, another Protestant country, has been a cruel persecutor of the Remonstrants, tho' in a small degree compared to the persecution of the Puritans and the Dissenters in England ; and she has come in for a share in this punishment, her commerce being now almost annihilated.

11. It should be *no one buyeth their merchandise any more.* W.

14. Beza supposes that this verse may have been transposed, and that its proper place was after v. 23. It certainly interrupts the sense in this place, and would have a much more natural connection in the other.

20. We are not to rejoice in the pain or distress of any person, not even those of our enemies. But we may rejoice in the fall of *tyranny*, as the cause of misery and distress to thousands.

21. From this circumstance and others, we may infer that the final destruction of the papal hierarchy will be sudden, and unexpected, and indeed it seems to be reserved for the appearance of Christ himself. For Paul says concerning the *man of sin*, 2. Thess. ii. 8. *that the Lord shall consume him with the breath of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming.* But so much of the power and splendour of the papacy may be destroyed before that time, as abundantly to justify this description.

This image is the same with that which was exhibited by Jeremiah with respect to ancient Babylon, Jer.

21. 63. *And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shall bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; and thou shall say, thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.*

24. This city had been the cause of so much bloodshed, that it might seem to have been the sole cause of it, tho' no doubt, many persons were slain in other places, and by other means.

Ch. XIX. Babylon being fallen, we have here a hymn of praise to God in heaven on the occasion, and on the prospect of the happy state of things that was to ensue upon it. After this we are presented with another vision, representing the victory of Christ over the anti-christian power, by another emblem.

1. The scene of this vision, as of the preceding, is in heaven, and the song is sung by a chorus of the heavenly host.

3. This language is borrowed from Is. xxxiv, 9. concerning antient Babylon, *The land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever and ever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste. None shall pass through it for ever and ever.* This is a description of a state of great desolation, in language rather hyperbolic, but which the event has sufficiently verified.

5. This voice was probably from some of the living creatures that were before the throne, or behind it, so that it seemed to proceed from the throne itself.

9. This must be the speech of the angel.

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10. It

10. It cannot be supposed that the apostle intended divine homage; but the act of prostration, which he offered, tho' a mark of respect and reverence often shewn from man to man, appeared to the angel to be more than he was entitled to, or than his services required. Tho' an angel, he was a servant of God, and also of Christ, in common with the apostle. The prophecies which he had been commissioned to impart formed only one part of the testimony to the divine mission of Jesus, a testimony which was borne by John himself, both as an apostle, and a prophet: The angel, therefore, was not in this case intitled to more respect than what was due from an equal to an equal.

Mr. W. renders, *For the spirit of this prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.* W.

11. We have here another distinct vision, the scene of which is first in heaven.

13. The person here represented is, no doubt, Christ, as preparing for his second coming, to judge the world, and to punish his enemies.

15. This is a repetition of the image of the vintage which was presented before, and the language is the same with that of Isaiah, with a view to the same subject, Ch. Lxiii, 3, *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with me. For I will tread them in my anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled on my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

To

To rule with a rod of iron is a phrase that frequently occurs in the scriptures, to express irresistible power employed in punishing, as Ps. ii. 8. *Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

18. This seems to be a repetition, tho' with different images, of the war of *Armageddon* above mentioned. The language in this verse is the same with that of *Ezekiel* in his allusion to the same subject, ch. xxxix, 17
 "And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God,
 "speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of
 "the field. Assemble yourselves; and come, gather
 "yourselves on every side, to my sacrifice, which I do
 "sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel; that ye may
 "eat flesh and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of
 "the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the
 "earth, &c."

21. This denotes the overthrow of both civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, the beast representing the former, and the false prophet (the same with the beast with two horns) representing the latter. Being slain by a sword proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, does not suggest the idea of a real slaughter; but rather that of a conquest obtained by the power of truth. But this account, taken in conjunction with others, and especially the prophecies of *Daniel*, leave no room to doubt but that the fall of these powers will be attended with much bloodshed. And as the cause of Christ will be advanced

ed by the defeat of these adversaries, he is represented at conducting the armies by which they are defeated. In no other sense can we suppose that Jesus will act in this business.

What is meant by *being cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*, which was the punishment of the beast and the false prophet, as distinguished from *being slain with the sword*, and the *fowls feeding on their flesh*, which is here said to be the fate of their adherents, does not appear. But as the former, being the *deceivers*, were more guilty than the latter, who were *deceived* by them, their punishment is expressed in terms which imply greater severity.

Ch. XX. From this place the visions grow, as might be expected, more indistinct, the times referred to being more remote. When the time to which we have now been conducted shall arrive, a farther effusion of the spirit is promised, and this will probably be, in part, as hitherto, the spirit of prophecy, which will give us a farther insight than we have any occasion for at present into times which will then be nearer to us, and of course more interesting. For to these times, I doubt not, the prophet Joel refers, Ch. ii, 28, "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon servants and upon handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit—Behold in those days, and in that time, I will bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, &c. In the mean time we must

must be thankful for the degree of light that the divine being has been pleased to give us with respect to this distant state of things, tho' generally expressed in figurative language, the information thus conveyed to us is sufficiently intelligible,, and it is in a high degree interesting and instructive.

3. This dragon is not the same with the *red dragon with seven heads and ten horns*, and which represented the Roman empire in its heathen state, Ch. xii, 3. there also called the *old Serpent, the Devil and Satan*, or the scarlet coloured beast with seven heads and ten horns, Ch. xvii, 3, which represented the same empire in its anti-christian state, any farther than either of them may represent the principle, or source of evil, in general by which they were actuated: for at this period no Roman empire in any form existed. Here, however, we are informed by an emblem, than which nothing can be more striking and sublime, that the principle which had produced so much mischief in the world will be restrained for a long period, called a *thousand years*; and if those be reckoned, as other prophetic numbers, viz. a year for a day, it will be a long period indeed; and that it will greatly exceed the number of a thousand of our years, may be inferred from the promise made to the Israelites, that the time of their affliction shall bear but a small proportion to that of their future glory and happiness, and their afflicted and calamitous state has now continued near two thousand years; Is. liv, 7. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but
" with

“with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,
 “saith the Lord thy redeemer, For this is as the wa-
 “ters of Noah unto me, For as I have sworn that the
 “waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so
 “have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor
 “rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and
 “the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not de-
 “part from thee, nor shall the covenant of my peace be
 “removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

If we consider that the world is, in many respects, but in its infant state, our knowledge of its extent, production, and laws, very imperfect, we must conclude, that if it was intended to arrive at what we may call a *mature age*, when the human race shall be as numerous, as intelligent, as virtuous and as happy, as the state of things will admit, a thousand years will be very insufficient for the purpose.

6. It is evident from this, that the proper *reign of Christ*, whatever it be, commences with these thousand years ; and continues through the whole of it, whatever be its extent, and probably expires with it ; and that his disciples, at least those who have suffered in his cause, will reign with him. Of this last circumstance there are repeated intimations in the New Testament. Here mention is made of more thrones than one, and our Saviour told his apostles, that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Nor can this be confined to those whom we usually call *martyrs*, for all the apostles, tho' persecuted, were not martyrs. They did not all die violent deaths. And if every degree of persecution will entitle a person to this distinction,

distinction, it may be claimed by all good christians. For Paul says, *All who live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution*, and from the nature of their situation, it must in a great measure always be so.

It has been a great question with divines, whether during this millenium there will be any *personal appearance* of Christ upon earth. Many think that all that is meant by it is a great prevalence of knowledge, virtue, and happiness, or *the reign of christianity*, that Christ will be no more visible then, than he is now, and that there will be no proper resurrection of any who are dead, till after this period, when, and not before, Christ will come in the clouds to raise all the dead and to judge the world. I was formerly of this opinion, as appears in my *Institutes of natural and revealed religion*, but I am not so at present for the following reasons.

1. There is no other than *one* more coming of Christ spoken of in the New Testament, and it is repeatedly said to be visibly *in the clouds*, in the same manner as he ascended. For when those who were present at the ascension were looking steadfastly towards heaven, two angels, in the form of men, stood by them and said, Acts i. 11. *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you see him go into heaven.* This is plain language, and if it be not to be understood literally, is a deception. Jesus himself says on his trial before the Highpriest, and when he was, as he says, *on his oath*, being *adjured by the living God* to speak the truth, when surely he would speak.

Speak intelligibly, Matt. xxvi. 64. "I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Paul uses language as plain as this on the same subject, in his epistle to the Thessalonians, Ch. iv. 15. "This we say by the word of the Lord," that is, by information from Christ himself, "that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them that are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

2. According to several parables of our Saviour he is to go to receive his kingdom, and then to return, to exercise it; and whenever he does return, he will reward his friends and punish his enemies. According to this representation, he has no proper kingdom at present, tho' he may, and no doubt has, some sphere of action. He must return before it commences.

Peter also says, Acts iii. 21. that "the heavens must receive him till the time of the restitution of all things, spoken of by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began." Now this time of the restitution of all things, is no doubt the time of the restoration of the Jews. For none of the ancient prophets speak of any other; and many of them do of this, and this must be the same that is here called the millennium.

nium, tho' no mention is made of the Jews in the account of it. Because if this be not the time of their future prosperity that is so often promised them as a nation, they can never enjoy it at all. After the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment, the whole state of things will be changed, and inconsistently with every thing that is promised the Jews as a nation; inhabiting their proper country, and increasing and multiplying in it. For in the heavenly state there will be no marrying and giving in marriage, but men will be as the angels of God in heaven.

3. Jesus said that when he should return he would receive his disciples to himself, that where he was they should be also; and if they be not risen from the dead, can we believe that so long a space as the millenium will intervene before they meet? He at least is now alive, and no doubt in some state of enjoyment, and of action too, but without their society, while they are in their graves. And if Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, be in the same state with Jesus, the imagination is quite shocked, and confounded, at a difference so very great as this, and for which no reason can be supposed.

4. According to Daniel, the reign of the saints is to be on the earth, and to succeed the four monarchies by taking their place, and answering the same purpose, tho' in a much better manner, the virtue and happiness of the subjects being, no doubt, better provided for. But still it was the very same kingdom which had been possessed by others that was to be given to them. Dan. vii. 26. "The judgment shall sit, and shall take away
" their

“their dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto
 “the end; and the kingdom, and the dominion, and
 “the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole hea-
 “ven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the
 “most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting king-
 “dom, and all dominions shall serve and obey it.”
 This is certainly a description of an earthly kingdom,
 as much as the preceding ones had been, and it is the
 same kingdom that is to be given to Christ and his
 faithful followers.

5. We are informed that after the general resur-
 rection, when *all shall be made alive*, this kingdom of
 Christ will come to a period, 1. Cor. xv. 21. “Since
 “by man came death, by man comes also the resurrec-
 “tion of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ
 “shall all be made alive. But every man in his own
 “order; Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are
 “Christ’s at his coming;” meaning, no doubt, his next
 coming, or the commencement of the millenium. *Then
 cometh the end.* It is not said at this time, but at the
 end of his reign; for it is added, “when he shall have
 “delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father,
 “when he shall have put down all rule, and authority,
 “and power; for he must reign till he has put all ene-
 “mies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be
 “destroyed is death. And when all things shall be
 “subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be
 “subject to him that put all things under him, that God
 “may be all in all.

This plain inference from the account is, that at the
 next and proper coming of Christ, *they that are Christ’s*,

or

or his disciples, will rise, he will then enter upon his proper kingdom, and when the end of it shall be accomplished, he will resign this kingdom ; and that this will take place at the general resurrection viz. that of *all that died in Adam*, which is in perfect agreement with the account here given by the apostle John.

Several objections, no doubt, may be made to the opinion here advanced ; but they do not appear to me to be unanswerable ; as the preceding arguments for the personal reign of Christ, subsequent to his visibly coming in the clouds, I think are.

1. During the millenium, and the residence of the Jews in Palestine, the human race will be propagated, and men will continue to live in all respects as they do at present. There will even according to Ezekiel, be princes of the house of David, who will have children, and reign in succession, as in former times.

But this objection, strong as it is, is much lessened, if not wholly removed, by the consideration of the present state of Jesus, and also of Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, who are living, and no doubt on the earth, tho' we cannot tell where they are, or how they are employed. For what relation can they bear to any other planet, or place ? Moses and Elijah appeared with our Saviour on the mount of transfiguration, and Jesus was seen by Paul, and gave him his instructions after his ascension. he also appeared to him at other times, and to the apostle John when he gave him the revelation, and on these occasions he appeared to be as much interested in the affairs of his church as he was before his death. And
if

If four persons can be in this peculiar state, without our knowing any thing concerning the mode of their subsistence, or the nature of their employment, the same may be the case of the greatest numbers. Mortals and immortals may have an equal relation to this earth, and even may have some connection, tho' wholly unknown to one of the parties.

Tho' Christ will come in the clouds, so as to be seen by all, it is no where said that he will always continue visible. He may return to the same state in which he is at present, and so continue till the general resurrection, and govern the people of Israel, and the world, as the Hebrew nation were directed by the Shekinah in early times, which the princes of the house of David will govern as David did, under superior occasional directions, and thus both may be said to reign. If God himself was at one time the proper king of Israel, this power may be delegated to Christ, and all be still subordinate to himself. And this future state of the world is called the *kingdom of heaven*, and of *God*, as well as of *Christ*, and *the saints*.

2. It may be said that, after such a visible appearance of Christ coming in the clouds, tho' his visible presence should not be constant, and also after the return of the Jews to their own country, in the fulfilment of antient prophecies, it will be impossible that there should be any more unbelievers, or any more wickedness in the world ; and therefore the rebellion of Gog and Magog in after times is incredible.

I answer, that the effect of these extraordinary appearances will, no doubt, be very great, and of long continuance

continuance. It is said to be so. But if the millenium be of such a length as I have supposed, men being born as they now are, and having the same passions, may resume the same practices and habits, and become capable of any thing that they have done before. This is as credible as the frequent rebellions of the Israelites in the wilderness, in the sight of daily miracles, or the conduct of the Jews in the time of Jesus and the apostles. Nay the infidelity of the present age, which is continually bringing to light such a mass of rational evidence in favour of revelation, difficulties being continually cleared up, and plausible objections satisfactorily answered, is a problem of hardly less difficult solution. To myself and others, the evidence of the miracles of Jesus is as satisfactory as that of any other history whatever; nay, all things considered, much more so. But to many others, whose mental powers are no doubt equal to ours, it does not appear so. The difference must arise either from their not having given the same attention to this evidence, or to the previous state of their minds not being the same with that of ours; so that the same objects do not make the same impression upon them. But this may be the case hereafter, as well as now, as human nature is the same at all times.

By the *second death* is, no doubt, to be understood the final punishment of the impenitently wicked, whatever that be; but to be exempt from this is not said to be the exclusive privilege of those who shine in the first resurrection.

7. After the preceding account of the millenium, we now come to the state of things subsequent to it ; but this being very remote from our times, the view of it with which we are presented may be expected to be very general and indistinct.

9. This invasion of Gog and Magog very much resembles that which is described much more largely by Ezekiel under the same name ; but it has been thought that the *times* were different, and some other circumstances also. That of Ezekiel has been supposed to take place before the complete settlement of the Jews in Palestine, because it is said Ez. xxxix. 22. "The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord, from that day forwards, and the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity—neither will I hide my face from them any more. For I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel," saith the Lord ;" whereas the invasion that is here mentioned does not take place till after the millenium.

The invasion of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel has also been thought to be the same that is described by Zechariah, which is unquestionably prior to the complete settlement of the people in Palestine. Ch. xiv. 2. "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." The event of this invasion is in some respects similar. For the prophet goes on to say, "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle," &c,

"de, &c." But tho' in both these cases the defeat is described as supernatural, nothing is said in Ezekiel, or in this place, of any previous success of the invaders, and in both the punishment is described as *immediate*. I therefore conclude that the invasion of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel and in this place is the same, and different from that which is described by Zechariah.

If we attend to all the circumstances, it will be found that the *time* of this invasion in Ezekiel is not necessarily different from this. Some considerable time must have elapsed after the return of the Israelites prior to this invasion. For it is said by the invader, Ez. Ch. xxxviii. 11. "I will go up to the land of unwalled villages. I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey, to turn thine hand upon the desolate places, that are now inhabited, and upon a people that are gathered out of all nations, who have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Therefore, son of man, prophecy, and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God, In that day, when my people dwell safely, shalt thou not know it, and thou shalt come from thy place, out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee." This is evidently after a long period of rest and prosperity, and therefore may be near the close of the millenium; and in this place it is not said that the general judgment *immediately* follows the defeat of Gog and Magog, only that the devil who deceived them shall be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet were before.

It has been thought that these invasions, tho' both are said to be by Gog and Magog, are not the same, because they come from *different quarters*, that in Ezekiel *from the north*, and this *from the four quarters of the earth*. But tho' in Ezekiel Gog himself comes from the North, his associates come in other directions, Ez. xxxviii. 5. *Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia with them, all of them with shield and helmet. Gomer with all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the North quarters, and many people with thee.* Here are people from East, West, and South, as well as from the North. For Gomer is supposed to be in Phrygia, and since it is probable that the *Cimbri* are of that stock, many of them were still more to the West. Ethiopia and Lybia are to the South, and Persia to the East.

The fate of the two invasions is the same. Here it is by *fire from heaven*, and we read in Ezekiel Ch. xxxviii. 22. "I will plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and hail stones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

Nothing is said in this place of the *motives* of this invasion; but in Ezekiel it is said to be for plunder. They expected to find the people wealthy and unguarded. On the whole, the resemblance is so great, that I cannot help concluding that the same invasion is intended in both the prophecies.

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As the beast and the false prophet do not represent individual persons, but powers, or kingdoms, the fire and brimstone into which they are thrown can only be emblematical of utter destruction, or of an end being finally put to them. It may be concluded therefore, that the Devil, or Satan, who is thrown into the same fire, is no person any more than the beast, or false prophet; and that the meaning of his being cast into this lake of fire is that all evil, natural and moral, will cease, and virtue and happiness become universal.

15. This is a vision entirely distinct from the former, and how far they are related to each other does not appear. Tho' the invasion of Gog and Magog is not to take place till after a thousand years, much time may intervene between that event and the general resurrection and judgment, which are here described.

If the being *cast into a lake of fire*, means extinction of being or annihilation in general, as it does with respect to the beast and the false prophet, this appears to be all that is really threatened to the most wicked and impenitent and certainly a dreadful punishment it must be to all who have enjoyed life, and valued it. This too is, no doubt agreeable to the literal sense of many passages of scripture, as that of Paul, 2 Thes. i. 9. *who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.*

All the hope, therefore, that we can entertain of the final restoration of the wicked, by means of a course of discipline in a future state, is derived from other reasons than scriptural ones, such as the improbability of their being brought to life again for the mere pur-

pose of being annihilated, or if they be raised for the sake of punishment, from the natural effect of punishment continued a sufficient time, which is always instruction and reformation ; the most depraved being naturally capable of being reformed by discipline judiciously applied. It also appears harsh in the conduct of the divine being, who must be supposed incapable of every sentiment of malevolence, but who on the contrary must wish the happiness of every being that he has brought into existence, and of whom he is the true parent, to make some men the instruments in the great plan of his providence, and after subjecting them to much misery to cast them away for ever. For there can be no doubt, but that all evil, moral as well as natural, is ultimately subservient to the greatest good. Otherwise, it could never have been permitted in the works of an infinitely benevolent and an infinitely powerful God.

To be *judged out of books* is a metaphor drawn from the form of proceeding in courts of justice, in which every thing is registered in books or an allusion to the *book of remembrance* which the divine being is sometimes represented as keeping, and in which is supposed to be recorded all the actions of men. This description is, no doubt, figurative, as well as that which our Saviour gave of the proceedings of the day of judgment, of his sitting on a throne, and his placing some on his right and others on his left. The literal truth, no doubt, is that in a future state every person will be rewarded according to his works, in whatever manner this will be brought about,

Ch.

Ch. XXI. These instructive visions having now carried us beyond the general resurrection, whatever lies beyond *this*, must necessarily be less intelligible than what has preceded ; but it is sufficiently clear to answer the purpose of encouraging the sincere christian; giving us a certain prospect of an abundant reward for our perseverance in well doing.

1. These *new heavens and new earth*, can only mean a renewed and improved state of this earth, in consequence of which it will be so different from the present, as to deserve to be called a *new earth*. The heavens certainly could not be changed, and therefore the meaning must be that every thing will wear a better aspect.

What is meant by there being *no more sea*, is very uncertain. For any thing that we can tell this may be literally true of the new formed earth. Some suppose that, as the sea is liable to be agitated by storms and tempests, which represent disturbances among men, the meaning is, that the cause of these and of all other evils will be removed.

2. This is evidently a figurative representation. A real city could not be brought down from heaven, and placed upon the earth. We are not, therefore, to suppose, that there ever will be such a city as this. It is only an emblem of the great glory and happiness of the future state. This city appearing in the air, its foundations, as well as every thing else of which it was composed, would be visible to the spectator.

The greatest attention was always given to the ornamenting of a bride when she was presented to her husband

band, her dress being frequently changed, and she presented to him every time.

4. Pain and troubles of many kinds answer the best of purposes in the present plan of moral discipline; but when the minds of men shall by this means be well formed, they may be able to proceed without them; as scholars have no occasion for grammars and other elementary books.

5. This signifies that the inhabitants of this new Jerusalem will not be subject to death. They will have access to a *fountain of life*, as Adam in paradise had to the *tree of life*. These emblems are very striking.

8. By the *fearful* must be meant those who through fear, or any other unworthy motive, abandon their religion in time of persecution. By the *lake burning with fire and brimstone*, we have seen that annihilation, or extinction of being, is intended.

16. The measuring of this new Jerusalem is similar to the measuring of the temple in the vision of Ezekiel. By the height of this city being *equal* to the length, and the breadth, can only be meant that it was in *due proportion* to them. For the height of the walls to be really equal to the other dimensions of any city would be preposterous. Besides this is inconsistent with what is farther said of it. For when it is said that the measure of this city was twelve thousand furlongs, meaning, no doubt, the length and the breadth of it, the wall is said to be one hundred and forty four cubits. But these numbers are evidently emblematical, the former being the number twelve, the number of the apostles, or of the tribes

tribes of Israel, multiplied by a thousand, and the other that of the elders that were round the throne.

The height of the city Le Clerc supposes to be reckoned from the bottom of the mountain on which it stood.

17. The cubit of a man may signify an ordinary cubit, not that of Ezekiel, Ch. xl. 5.

18. Tho' of the colour of gold, it appeared to be transparent.

19. These precious stones are not all the same with those that were in the breast plate of the Jewish high-priest, tho' some of them are so.

24. This seems to be an allusion to the account that Isaiah and other antient prophets give of the Gentiles contributing to enrich the temple that will be built after the return of the Jews. The meaning may be, that this city will be as rich and splendid, as if all the wealth in the world entered in it.

Ch. XXII. 1. This very much resembles the river which Ezekiel saw to issue from the *threshold of the temple*, Ch. xlvii, 1. as this does from the *throne of God*, which was probably in a temple. Of the river in Ezekiel it is farther said, Ch. xlvii. 12. *And by the river shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed. It shall bring forth new fruits according to its months; because their water they issued from the sanctuary. The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

2^d What is meant by these emblems it is vain for us to conjecture. This *tree of life* corresponds to the above mentioned *river of life*.

5. A reign naturally implies subjects. But who they will be, or how those who are called *kings and priests*, will be employed, we cannot tell.

We have now come to the close of all the prophetic visions. What remains of this extraordinary book is calculated to excite the closest attention to it; giving us the strongest assurance of the certainty, and importance, of what is revealed in it.

6. The things here referred to can only be either the warnings against the doctrines and practices of the Gnostics, in the epistles to the seven churches, or against the anti-christian errors and abuses represented by the beast and the false prophet.

7. This is calculated to excite our attention and vigilance. *Quickly* here means *certainly*, tho' in the eye of God, to whom every thing future, as well as past, is as it were present, the most distant events will seem near. And to the eye of faith whatever is really certain, will have the same effect as if it was actually present.

9. This is the second time that the apostle was impelled, out of respect and reverence to prostrate himself before the angel, who explained these visions to him, and of his being reproved in the same manner. It is certain, however, that he did not mean to pay him divine worship.

11. This seems to denote that these would be the last warnings that would ever be given to the world; so that if they were not improved, men would of course remain impenitent, and liable to condemnation.

15. It

15. It was usual with the Jews to call those persons whom they held in great abhorrence, on account of their impurity, *dogs*. All the antient idolaters were addicted to the arts of forcery or magic, by which they expected to do great things, and they were generally applied to malicious purposes.

16. The *root*, in this place, must mean a *branch from the root*, or *stock* of David. And in Isaiah and the other prophets the Messiah is called *the branch*.

17. The bride signifies the church, the image being a marriage feast, to which she, as well as the bridegroom, invited the guests.

19. This can only refer to known perversions of scripture in general, and of this book in particular, which could only be for some sinister purpose, and could not be designed to deter us from using our best judgments in the interpretation of it. Indeed, to this we are strongly invited.

ADDITIONAL

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

GENESIS III. 1.

It is evident that Moses had no idea of any thing more than a common serpent being concerned in this transaction. That the devil, or any evil spirit animated this serpent, is a modern and altogether unfounded opinion. None of the writers in the New Testament appear to have entertained this idea, tho' at that time the opinion of possession was universal. An account of a being called *Satan* occurs in the book of Job, which is probably as old as the time of Moses ; but neither this term, nor any other equivalent to it, is found in the writings of Moses. By him good and evil are ascribed to the same great being, whose purposes are equally answered by them both.

Ch. XXIX. 2. In Arabia the inhabitants cover their wells lest the sand, being raised and carried about by the wind, should fill them up.

24. Chardin says that in the East none but those who are very poor marry their daughters without giving them a female slave for a handmaid.

Ch.

Ch. XXXIII. 19. The word here translated *money* signifies *lambs*, with the figure of which it is not improbable that these pieces of money were stamped, being each of the value of a lamb.

LEVITICUS XI. 29.

THE word here rendered *mouse* (מִשְׁכָּנִי) is thought to be the *Yerboa*, an animal that makes no use of its fore feet in running, but jumps with its hinder ones only. The same is mentioned Is. Lxvi. 17.

LEVITICUS XVIII. 21.

IN my *Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos*, p. 183, I have quoted from Sonnerat an account of the superstitious Hindoos walking over a quantity of burning coals, in honour of their deities.

The writers, and works, from which many of the Notes are collected, and which for the sake of conciseness, are denoted by a single letter, or as few letters as possible, are the following :

- B.** Bishop Barrington in Bowyer's Conjectures.
- BL.** Mr. Blayney.
- Bow.** Mr. Bowyer.
- C.** Commentaries and Essays, by a society for promoting the knowledge of the Scriptures,
- D.** Mr. Dawson,
- Du.** Mr. Durrel,
- GR.** Mr. Green,
- H.** Mr. Hallet,
- HE.** Mr. Heath,
- Ho.** Houbigant,
- HU.** Mr. Hunt,
- J.** Dr. Jebb,
- K.** Dr. Kennicot,
- L.** Bishop Lowth,
- MAR.** Martin the Benedictine,
- MARK.** Markland in Bowyer,
- MER.** Mr. Merrick,
- N.** Bishop Newcome,
- O.** Dr. Owen in Bowyer,
- P.** Pilkington,
- PE.** Bishop Pearce,
- T.** Mr. Turner,
- T. R.** Theological Repository,
- W.** Mr. Wakefield,
- WH.** Mr. Whiston,

Some other names are printed at length as Gale
Dodson &c.

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